

# Animal Agriculture is Immoral

AN ANTHOLOGY

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# Animal Agriculture is Immoral

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## **DEDICATION**

To all of the animals with whom we share this beautiful planet,  
and to all of the children who will inherit the  
consequences of our choices.





## PROLOGUE

**"The world does not need to be changed. It needs to be understood. When you understand the world, you will transform, automatically, effortlessly and the world will change with you."**

**- Father Anthony DeMello**

Imagine that you find Michelangelo, after sculpting his masterpiece, David, hammering his chisel into his stomach, trying to kill himself. You stop him and ask, "Why are you trying to kill yourself?"

He replies: "Just look at the mess I've made on the floor with all these marble shards. How am I going to clean that up with my hammer and chisel?"

Wouldn't you tell him that he could clean that up with a different set of tools, e.g., a bucket and a broom, following which we could all enjoy the David he had sculpted for centuries to come?

This is exactly the situation that we, as a species, find ourselves in today. We are done with the sculpting of homeostasis for planet Earth so that Life never ever has to experience an ice age again as long as we are around. However, we have not yet relinquished the tools we used for creating this homeostasis, especially the rigged game of money with its

associated human, white, male, able supremacist ideologies that are now baring their fangs worldwide. By clinging to these antiquated tools and supremacist ideologies, we are making it seem like we are trying to destroy all life on Earth while killing ourselves off in the process.

But the non-human animals, who have been assisting us in the sculpting of homeostasis, have been trying to wake us up and steering us on to the right path. They have screamed at us in factory farms and slaughterhouses and they have infected us with pandemics, but our institutions have been too sclerotic to respond accurately. Now it is up to we, the people, to create new, distributed ways of organizing ourselves and take charge of our own destiny. But it begins with recognizing that something we have been doing all along, that we have considered as normal, is actually immoral.

As progressive thinkers, we have widely acknowledged that colonialism is immoral, racism is immoral, ableism is immoral and sexism is immoral. But we have not yet widely acknowledged that speciesism — the assertion of superiority of a single species, homo sapiens sapiens, over the millions of other species on planet Earth — and discrimination, exploitation and oppression of animals and other species on the basis of that assertion, is actually immoral.

This book attempts to redress that omission. It contains a variety of scholarly contributions from religious, spiritual, environmental and social perspectives, all converging to the same inescapable conclusion — speciesism and its most common manifestation, animal agriculture, is immoral. It needs to be buried in the trash heap of history, along with colonialism, racism, ableism, patriarchy, casteism and other such discredited ideologies.

The time to do it is NOW.

Sailesh Rao,  
Sep 2020.

# **1. THROUGH THE EYES OF COMPASSION**

PRAMODA CHITRABHANU

Now, more than ever before, abuse of animals is on the rise. As a result, there is increasing global warming, ecological damage and environmental pollution. These problems are threatening the entire human race, making it a matter of grave concern, especially for those who are already consciously aware, but many people have no idea of how serious current threats are and that our own lives are at risk. Indeed, we are all connected and woven together, like the threads of fabric. It is important that many more people recognize that each of us is a vital thread in each other's life tapestry. It is all very well to say that an individual must wrestle with his conscience — but only if his conscience is awakened and informed.

Industrial society is very effective at concealing the enormous suffering and massive slaughtering of farmed animals. It is sad to see that innocent, defenseless creatures are being put through such gruesome pain, far from human eyes! There's no doubt that hiding farms and slaughterhouses from our view makes it easier for modern consumers to ignore the truth about where their food comes from. After knowing the truth, no thoughtful, sensitive person can argue that this practice is in any way moral, ethical or compassionate.

In layman's terms, animal agriculture—or factory farming as it's commonly called—is the mass industrialization of breeding, raising, and slaughtering of animals for human consumption. Factory farming cruelly exploits animals, cramming them together and abusing them in an effort to boost productivity, causing unnecessary animal suffering. Billions of animals endure short, miserable lives in factory farms, where the priority is profit above all else.

Animals are treated as worse than mere commodities. To increase profits, factory-farmed animals are crammed together in barren pens, crates or cages without natural light or stimuli, preventing normal behaviors, such as nesting or foraging for chickens. This often causes the animals to inflict injuries on each other out of sheer boredom, frustration and stress. To reduce injuries, teeth are clipped, tails docked and beaks trimmed – all usually carried out without anesthesia or pain killers.

Animals are sentient living beings, not objects that are made for human beings to use, abuse and consume. They have lives full of emotions and feelings, and experience pain and pleasure, as we do.

As Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the Nobel Peace Prize Recipient in 1952, said in his book *A Place for Revelation*: "wherever you see life - that is you. What is this recognition, this knowledge comprehended by the most learned and most childlike alike? It is 'Reverence for Life,' reverence for the impenetrable mystery that meets us in our universe, an existence different from ourselves in external appearance, yet inwardly of the same character with us. Very similar, awesomely related. This dissimilarity, the strangeness between us and other creatures is removed. Reverence before the infinity of life means the removal of the strangeness, the restoration of shared experiences, and of compassion and sympathy."

Farm animals are sentient creatures who have interests, a sense of identity, and the capacity to anticipate, fear, and feel pain. For many farmers, cows are just numbers, not names. Animals don't eat food; they

convert feed. The ultimate goal is simple for the farmer: raise cows as quickly, efficiently, and safely as possible; transform them into well-marbled cuts of beef; and throughout the process, minimize inputs while maximizing outputs. When the farmer is challenged on the ethics of industrial agriculture, he smiles and shakes his head, insisting that the cows he fattened and slaughtered were of no more moral worth than the iron grills that enclosed them. Farmers see factory farms as good business, much as an assembly line supervisor sees fabricating cars.

The fate of industrially farmed animals is one of the most pressing ethical and moral questions of our time, and the environmental impact of animal agriculture is huge. Animal-based agriculture contributes to land and water pollution and degradation, biodiversity loss, acid rain, coral reef degeneration and deforestation. Nowhere is this impact more apparent than for climate change – livestock farming contributes at least 18% of human produced greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

Animal agricultural practices have been found to have a variety of effects on the environment, on the planet, on human health and safety, and even on the human psyche and consciousness. Some of the environmental effects that have been associated with dairy industries and meat productions are pollution through fossil fuel usage, climate-changing methane emission from animals, enormous amounts of toxic waste, and the very wasteful use of enormous amounts of land, water, and energy.

Methane emitted from cattle and other farmed animals accelerates global warming and ozone layer depletion. The planet's entire petroleum reserves are being depleted. Trees are being cut down and forests destroyed at an alarming rate all around the world to create land for grazing and growing feed crops for animals. The depletion of natural resources, environmental damage, climate change, ecological imbalance, and annihilation of innumerable life forms all result from our insatiable consumption of animal products.

How much horror do we want to contribute to this world? The truth is that there can be no ethical defense of an industry that commodifies and exploits sentient beings. When we see this destruction all around us, we question, WHY? Humanity is passing through a crisis of character, morality and human dignity. The erosion of human values is taking place in every field of life. We know the truth, yet we turn away from it as if nothing is happening.

Consider the following words of an anonymous compassionate person who witnessed the suffering of animals,

“Unseen they suffer, unheard they cry.  
In agony they linger, in silence they die.  
Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by?”

These are lines that eloquently express the pain and suffering of animals who are subjected to unimaginable exploitation and torture by human beings, mainly for meat, eggs and dairy products. It is sad to see that innocent, defenseless creatures are subjected to such cruelty, anguish and grief. How can we as humans sit quietly by when our brothers and sisters are in such a terrible state? Is it not our duty to protect and help them?

Today, the whole world is under the strong and monstrous grip of Covid-19, the Coronavirus pandemic. Humans die by the hundreds of thousands all around the world, and others are living their lives in fear and anxiety. The pandemic seems to have been caused by bats, pangolins, or other wild animals trafficked at meat markets. Given the likely animal origins of Covid-19 and other viral epidemics, there is a likely causal relationship between human's consumption of wild animals and the coronavirus ravaging the globe. Individually, humans must change their food habits and stop eating animal products. Collectively, we must transform the global food system and work toward ending animal agriculture.

There is so much suffering going on in this world that remains

unseen - it is a highly guarded secret. We must increase awareness that animals are living beings, just like you and me. How long shall people pretend to believe that animals have no souls and so they feel no pain? It is time to wake up now before another pandemic strikes us.

Let us stop ignoring the violence and act to end the cruelty that is inflicted on so many innocent creatures, for violence begets violence, as love begets love. Thankfully, unlike carnivores, we have the choice to reject the role of predator in favor of a more enlightened way of nourishing ourselves, through plant-based food, in alignment with our true nature as beings who prefer peace over violence, and gentleness over aggression. It is important to strive for a world that can be characterized by a sense of universal compassion and responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to our fellow forms of life.

In closing, I'd like to offer a small prayer:

Oh! Hidden Life, Vibrant in Every Atom,  
Oh! Hidden Light, Shining in Every Creature,  
Oh! Hidden Love, Embracing All in Oneness,  
May Each of Us, Who Feels as One with Thee,  
Know that We Are Therefore, One with Every Other!





## **2. ANIMALS, RELIGION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: THE BIBLE'S TEACHINGS ON PROTECTING ANIMALS AND NATURE**

LEWIS REGENSTEIN

All of the world's major religions have a strong tradition of teaching respect for nature and kindness to animals. Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, and Jewish scriptures have a common theme of God's love for the Creation, and the creatures of the world.

The Bible and our Judaic-Christian heritage clearly teach and command us to treat animals with kindness and respect. The massive abuse and suffering legally inflicted on billions of farm animals every year is a clear violation of the teachings of our religious faith, and cannot be justified by any person of faith and decency.

But even if you are not religious, you can still use these teachings to reach out to and influence the many people who believe strongly and often literally in the words of the Bible, such as conservative Christians and Orthodox Jews. Any religious person who disagrees with these teachings, has an argument not with animal protectionists but with the Bible, to which fundamentalists are so devoted.

The people for and by whom the Bible was written thousands of years ago were intimately familiar with wildlife and domestic animals, especially the practice of raising cattle and other animals. The Scriptures contain strict rules governing the treatment of farm animals and indeed all of God's creatures, designed to prevent any unnecessary pain and suffering. Even the Ten Commandments provides protection for animals and forbids the working of them on the Sabbath.

Many of our modern day practices, such as factory farming, blatantly violate these biblical laws, and are causing massive damage to people, animals, the environment, and essential natural resources such as the water we drink and the air we breathe. Any truly religious person must therefore oppose these forms of blatant cruelty inflicted on the animals under our care. Those who disagree have an argument not against animal protectionists but against the literal words of the Holy Scriptures.

In the final analysis, perhaps the strongest theological argument for kindness to animals can be made on the grounds of equity. How, some have asked, can a truly religious person ask for mercy from what is above him unless he is merciful to what is below him?

### **Protecting God's Creation**

The literature of the Bible and of the Judaic-Christian religious tradition is filled with admonitions, commandments, and stories promoting conservation, respect for nature and the environment, and kindness to animals. These rules and writings have traditionally emphasized God's love for His Creation and all of its creatures. The obligation of humans to respect and protect animals and the natural environment appears throughout the Bible and the writings of its prophets and other leaders.

The Bible is clear, emphatic, and unequivocal in praising the Lord's creation, and no believer in the words of the Bible can deny these passages. Neither can one ignore nor violate these teachings without

disobeying the laws of God and the teachings of His prophets.

The Scriptures make it clear that God expects humans to act as caretakers of His Creation, to cherish and protect His creatures and the natural environment. These teachings were eloquently summarized by Jesus, who said that no sparrow falls to earth without the Lord's caring (Luke 12:6).

Our modern-day policies and programs that wipe out entire populations and species of wildlife, and confine huge numbers of food animals together in miserable conditions, causing massive pollution and damage to wildlife and the environment, clearly violate God's commands to "replenish the earth," conserve natural resources, and treat animals with kindness.

### **The Ten Commandments: Do Not Overwork Your Animals**

The Bible is emphatic in stressing the concept of kindness to animals. The Mosaic law laid down in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy clearly teach compassion and kindness towards other creatures, especially farm animals. Numerous passages forbid the overworking of animals and require that stray and lost creatures be helped.

The laws delineated in the Bible make it clear that these injunctions to help animals are intended for the sake of these creatures and not that of the owner. One is required to help animals that belong to enemies to whom no obligation is owed, as well as those of friends; one is forbidden to "pass by" an animal in distress.

Exodus 23 states, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden...thou shalt surely help with him."

Even the most holy of the laws—the Ten Commandments—

specifically mentions that cattle and donkeys must not be worked on the Sabbath. In Exodus and Deuteronomy, several animal-protection statutes are given by the Lord to Moses, including: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it, thou shalt not do any work, nor thy ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle...Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest" (Exodus 20:10, 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:13).

At the same time, the Lord also commands that every seventh year the land, the vineyards, and the olive groves not be sown or harvested but be allowed to "rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat."

Similarly in Leviticus 25:4-7 and Exodus 23, the Lord commands that what grows naturally in the fields left fallow in the seventh year shall be for one's servants "and for thy cattle, and for the beasts that are in thy land."

### **Forbidding Cruelty to Farm Animals**

The Bible clearly decrees that cruelty to domestic animals is forbidden. The ox is entitled to the fruit of its labor. -- Deuteronomy 25:4 states, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." Moreover, Deuteronomy 22:10 tells us, "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together," suggesting that pairing animals of different sizes and strengths would cause a conflict and would place a strain on the weaker of them or perhaps on both.

Exodus 22:29 and Leviticus 22:27-28 require that a newborn animal remain with its mother for the first week of its life before being sacrificed, so that the young creature can have at least seven days of warmth and nourishment from its mother. And "ye shall not kill it and its young both in one day," presumably to avoid the trauma of having the mother see her infant slain before her.

Contrast these ancient and remarkably humane laws of a

primitive people of three to four thousand years ago to modern-day factory farming practices. Today, veal calves are usually taken from their mothers at birth, denied mother's milk and other nutrition, deliberately undernourished and kept their entire lives in a small crate in which they cannot move around. These circumstances produce an anemic, muscle-free condition in the calf that gives the meat its tenderness and light appearance.

### **A Righteous Man Has Regard for the Life of His Beast**

The Bible makes clear that God condemns and harshly punishes cruelty to animals. When Jacob called together his twelve sons—representing the twelve tribes of Israel—to say what fate would befall them, Simeon and Levi were castigated and chastised for crippling oxen, among other things (Genesis 49:6-7).

Proverbs 6:16-17 tells us that among the "six things which the Lord hates" are "hands that shed innocent blood." Proverbs 12:10 goes on to say that a righteous person cares for his animals: "A righteous man hath regard for the life of his beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

This important verse suggests a biblical division of people into two distinct types: those who are "righteous" and just and are kind to their animals, and those who are "wicked" and are cruel to creatures under their care.

Hosea 2:18-20 suggests that God would make a pact with the animals to give them safety from being hunted and persecuted by abolishing the instruments of their destruction: "And in that day, will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow and the sword, and the battle out of the earth; and I will make them to lie down safely."

The fifth chapter of Job also prophesies a day when mankind

will be at peace with nature: “Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth, For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.”

Isaiah 11:6-9 eloquently describes how the animal kingdom will be included in the blessings of peace on earth when it is achieved: “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion—and the lion shall eat straw like the ox...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.”

The story of Rebekah at the well stresses the importance of kindness to animals as a personal attribute. In this account, the patriarch Abraham, seeking a wife for his son Isaac, sends his trusted servant out to search for a suitable woman. The servant chooses Rebekah after she demonstrates a kind disposition by drawing water not just for him but for his camels as well (Genesis 24:19).

Similarly in the twelfth chapter of 2 Samuel, the Lord uses the sad story of the inexcusable killing of a family's beloved pet lamb to teach King David a lesson and to show him the error of his ways.

### **The Beasts of the Field Shall Be at Peace with Thee**

The Book of Psalms makes it clear that God's goodness and compassion are not reserved just for humans but extend to all of His creatures. Psalm 36:6 praises the Deity, saying that animals as well as humans are subject to His protection: “Thy righteousness is like the great mountains....Oh Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy loving kindness, Oh God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”

Psalm 145 reiterates this theme of God's concern for all His creatures: “The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works...thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”

## **Reverence for Life in the New Testament**

The New Testament contains many favorable references to protecting animals and nature. In Luke 12:6, Jesus stresses that even the lowliest of creatures is loved by God: "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God."

Matthew 10:29 also reports Jesus' belief that God cares for all His creatures, even those of little monetary value to us. In teaching God's infinite wisdom and love for mankind, Matthew quotes Jesus as saying, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."

In Luke 13:15, Jesus uses the biblical laws of humane treatment of animals to justify healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath, saying, "Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it?"

Again in Luke 14:5, Jesus similarly justifies healing a man on the Sabbath saying, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?"

And in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks of "the fowls of the air," saying that "your heavenly father feedeth them."

Interestingly, nowhere in the New Testament is Jesus depicted as eating meat of any kind in his lifetime, not even at The Last Supper, although on two occasions after his death and resurrection he is said to have eaten fish.

Many Christians see deep significance in the story of Jesus beginning his life among the animals (Luke 2:7). Denied shelter and lodging by the humans of Bethlehem in Judea, Mary and Joseph were forced to use a manger for Jesus' birthplace. There, Jesus was born presumably in the company of such creatures as donkeys, oxen, cows, and sheep.

Jesus' appreciation for animals is demonstrated by the repeated analogies and references to animals that he used in his teachings. He referred to his followers, and those who worship the Lord, as sheep, and he compared God's care for Jerusalem with a hen's concern for her brood. Often in his teachings, Jesus compared himself to such animals as the lamb and the dove, known for their innocence, meekness, and docility. He often represented animals as being under God's providence; and Jesus' repeated statements to practice love, mercy, and compassion are consistent with, and indeed fundamental to, the humane and preservation ethic.

### **The Bible's Conservation Message**

The obligation of humans to respect and protect the natural environment is a theme that appears throughout the Bible, often referring to just the kinds of problems we face today: cruelty to farm animals, destruction of wildlife and habitat, and pollution of our food, air, and water.

What is perhaps the world's first anti-pollution law is found in Deuteronomy 23:13-15, which forbids contaminating the land with human waste. And in 2 Kings 2:19-22, the prophet Elisha appears to remedy a crisis of water pollution that was causing miscarriages in the land.

In Jeremiah 9:9-11 and Habakkuk 2:17, the Lord warns against destroying nature and wildlife. In Jeremiah, the Lord says that He "...will take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation...; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beasts are fled; they are gone." And Habakkuk condemns "...the destruction of the beasts, which made them afraid." In both cases, the punishment is that the land is "laid waste," just what we are doing today to much of our farmland and wilderness.

Trees and forests are accorded a special reverence in the Bible, and one of the world's first nature-protection regulations is found in



Deuteronomy 20:19, which forbids the destruction of fruit-bearing trees even when waging war against a city. The verse concludes that "thou shalt not cut them down (for a tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege."

Elsewhere in the Mosaic law, strict and detailed rules are set forth on caring for trees. For example, Genesis 19:23-25 orders that fruit trees be left wild and unpruned for the first few years in order to give them strength and increase their yield. Throughout the Bible, in stressing the reverence humans should have toward the land, the Scriptures impart a strong conservation message, warning against over-utilizing and wearing out natural resources.

In Leviticus 25:2-4, the Lord commands that "...the land shall keep a Sabbath unto the Lord...in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath for the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard."

Also in Leviticus 26:3-6, the Lord's appreciation for the land is made clear when He promises the Israelites that, if they obey His commandments, the land will reward them: "If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them; then I will give you rains in their season, and the land shall yield her produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit...And I will give peace in the land."

There is even a suggestion that practicing conservation and kind treatment of animals may ensure oneself of a long life. Deuteronomy 22:6-7 says that if one chances upon a bird's nest with the mother sitting upon the eggs or the young, and one takes the latter, one must let the mother go "that it may go well with you," and that you may live a long life ("prolong thy days").

Besides the humane ethic enunciated here, remarkable for a food-gathering society, the early Hebrews understood the conservation principle of preserving breeding stock, a lesson we would do well to heed today.

## God's Love for Nature

Throughout the Book of Genesis, God looks with special favor on "the swarms of living creatures" He created, blessing them, commanding them to "be fruitful and multiply," and repeatedly characterizing their creation as "good."

Some biblical scholars see significance in the fact that God pronounced each thing He created – the whales, birds, cattle, "everything that creepeth upon the ground," and the other "beasts of the earth --as "good" in itself (Genesis 1:21, 25). But when the Creation was combined and united, the Lord declared it "very good" (Genesis 1:31), perhaps because He had achieved His will of creating a universe of harmony, or a balanced ecosystem as we would call it today.

The theme of God's concern for His Creation is eloquently summed up by Psalm 104, which praises the Lord for His greatness in providing for all of His creatures. It notes how dependent we all are on the ecological system that God has established, proclaiming, "Oh Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts." This Psalm goes on to describe how the Lord delights in His works and "renewest the face of the earth" with His spirit, which is in every living creature.

In Deuteronomy 8:7-9, Moses describes the Promised Land as an ecological paradise, noting its rich and beautiful environment and its "fountains and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills." Moses stresses to the Israelites the sanctity of the land: "A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:11-12).

God's love of the land for its own sake, not just as a servant for humans, is demonstrated when the Lord speaks to Job from the whirlwind telling him how He does... "cause it to rain on the earth,

where no man is: on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth" (Job 12:7-11).

A primary thesis of Job is that humans must live in harmony with nature and seek to learn from its wise and mysterious ways: "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee" (Job 12:7-11).

### **Human-Stewardship Responsibilities**

Not only does the Bible stress that nature reflects God's glory and greatness, but the Scriptures also make it clear that humans have been given a special responsibility to protect and care for the natural environment. Yet ironically, this biblical mandate has often been used as a license to despoil and destroy instead of an obligation to protect and preserve.

Probably no passage in the Bible has been so misunderstood and misinterpreted as the passage in the first chapter of Genesis (1:26) wherein God gives mankind "dominion" over nature and animals. This has often been mistakenly interpreted as a synonym for ownership, giving humans the right to treat nature and animals as they see fit. However, the Bible makes it clear that human dominion consists of stewardship over the natural world. This duty carries the responsibility not to mistreat the earth and to protect it from abuse, as Genesis 1:26 makes clear when God commands mankind to "replenish the earth...."

Further evidence of human-stewardship obligations is found in the Bible stressing that mankind is only a "sojourner," a temporary resident of the land the Lord loans to him. In Leviticus 25:23, the Lord proclaims, "The land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me."

The Twenty-fourth Psalm makes clear that the world belongs not

to humankind but to God, observing that "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; The world, and they that dwell therein." Similarly, Deuteronomy 10: 14 proclaims, "Behold, unto the Lord thy God belongeth the heaven and the earth, with all that therein is."

All living things are also God's creatures and belong to Him, as the Lord clearly points out in Psalm 50: "For every beast of the forest is mine; and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountain; and the wild beasts of the field are mine."

### **Into Your Hand Are They Delivered**

The Bible contains numerous strictures against the wanton or cruel killing of wildlife and domestic animals. The view that mankind's fate depends on protecting and preserving the earth's life-support systems—the environment -- can be found in Ecclesiastes 3:19-21, which stresses that if wildlife perishes, humans will not long survive: "For that which befallerth the sons of men befallerth beasts, even one thing befallerth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other, yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast.... All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

In numerous places in the Bible, the Lord acts toward humans and animals in an equitable way. When God saved Noah and his family from destruction, He treated the animals in a similar manner: "And God remembered Noah and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark" (Genesis 8:1).

Genesis 9:8-10 points out at some length that after the waters of the great flood receded, God promised there would never again be a flood to destroy the earth. The Almighty made this covenant not only with Noah and his descendants but also with "every living creature that is with you, the fowl, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth." Indeed, God

makes no distinction between people and animals in establishing His covenant "between me and the earth" (Genesis 9:12-17).

The book of Genesis clearly spells out humankind's stewardship responsibilities toward the animals delivered into our care after the great flood. Chapter nine of Genesis begins with the Lord commanding Noah and his sons to "replenish the earth," saying of the world's wildlife, "into your hand are they delivered."

### **Religion and Protection of Animals**

These conservation and humane precepts of the Scriptures were well understood by the early leaders of Judaism and the Christian Church. For the first thousand years or so, the Christian saints are depicted as having close and friendly relationships with wild and domestic creatures. There are thousands of stories and legends concerning such revered saints as Giles, Jerome, Benedict, Meinrad, Columba, Cuthbert, Patrick, and hundreds of others; the best known, of course, is the patron saint of animals, Francis of Assisi.

One of the greatest Christian theologians of all times, the medical missionary and Nobel prize winner Dr. Albert Schweitzer, wrote that humans were "compelled by the commandment of love ... proclaimed by Jesus" to respect all forms of life. He taught that one should avoid "carelessly cutting off the head of a single flower growing on the edge of the road, for in doing so (would be to) injure life without being forced to do so by necessity." Schweitzer wrote eloquently of the need to show reverence for all forms of life: "man's religion is of little value unless even seemingly insignificant creatures benefit from it. A truly religious man does not ask how far this or that deserves sympathy...to him, life as such is sacred."

Another leading Christian theologian, Reverend Norman Vincent Peale, has written, "I do not believe a person can be a true Christian and at the same time deliberately engage in cruel or inconsiderate treatment of animals."

The Reverend Dr. Billy Graham has written, "The Bible teaches that we are not to abuse or punish animals in a cruel way. God has created them, and while mankind is given dominion over the animals, we are not to treat them cruelly." Reverend Lloyd Putman has warned against practicing "religious myopia," saying that "we have a small religion if it has no room for the rest of God's creatures."

The famous English theologian Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801- 1890) once wrote that "cruelty to animals is as if a man did not love God."

Pope John Paul II has stated that Christians have a moral obligation to protect the environment, saying in a homily that "respect for natural resources of our planet" must be a part of everyone's conscience. He has also said that "To repair...and to prevent...damage inflicted on nature" is a "grave moral obligation."

### **Judaism Requires Kindness to Animals**

Similarly, Judaism has a long tradition of reverence for animals and nature based on biblical teachings.

Jews can take pride in our ancient laws and traditions that, for thousands of years, have mandated compassion and concern for animals and required respectful, responsible stewardship of God's Creation. Jews are the first people in the world known to have recorded and adopted such teachings.

The Jewish people are charged with the mission of being "a light unto the nations" (Isaiah 42:6, 60:3), a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6), and "compassionate children of compassionate ancestors" (The Talmud, Beitza 32b). This has inspired the Jews through the ages to provide the world with moral and spiritual leadership.

## **Judaism Forbids Cruelty to other Creatures**

Judaism has strict laws and teachings forbidding cruelty to animals. There is an entire code of laws ("tsa'ar ba'alei hayim," the requirement "to prevent the suffering of living creatures") mandating that animals be treated with compassion. Jews are not allowed to "pass by" an animal in distress or being mistreated, even on the Sabbath.

As the authoritative Encyclopedia Judaica (The Jewish Encyclopedia) observes, "In rabbinic literature...great prominence is given to demonstrating God's mercy to animals, and to the importance of not causing them pain...Moral and legal rules on the treatment of animals are based on the principle that animals are part of G-d's creation toward which man bears responsibility. The Bible...makes it clear not only that cruelty to animals is forbidden but also that compassion and mercy to them are demanded of man by God."

The Encyclopedia sums up the rabbinical law by saying, "The principle of kindness to animals... is as though G-d's treatment of man will be according to his treatment of animals."

Similarly, the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia observes that "The Jewish attitude toward animals has always been governed by the consideration that that they, too, are God's creatures... [and] the obligation to respect and consider the feelings and needs of lower creatures... The non-canonical...writings strongly urge kindness towards animals, declaring that one who harms an animal harms his own soul."

"The kind treatment of animals wads made part of the moral climate of Jewish living," notes Nathan Ausubel in The Book of Jewish Knowledge. "The humane regard among Jews for people extended also to encompass animals. But behind it was the all pervasive feeling of compassion urged upon the righteous":

As the Holy One, blessed be He, has compassion upon man, so

has He compassion upon the beasts of the field...and for the birds of the air (Midrash).

### **Ancient Writings Require Compassion**

The renowned Irish historian W.E.H. Lecky (1838-1903) writes in his monumental work, *History of European Morals, from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869), that “the rabbinical writers have been remarkable for the great emphasis with which they inculcated the duty of kindness to animals.”

He observes that the Jews have the longest history of such a tradition of any people, and “That tenderness to animals, which is one of the most beautiful features in the Old Testament writings, shows itself, among other ways, in the command not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, or to yoke together the ox and the ass.”

He notes the irony that the Jewish commandment that the ox be allowed to eat while working in the field was already some 2,500 years old when in Sicily, in the 18th century, peasants tending grape orchards would have their mouths muzzled so they could not ‘steal’ a grape.

### **The Devastation Caused by Factory Farming**

The authors of the Bible could hardly have foreseen the suffering and devastation of animals caused by modern-day society, which clearly violate the spirit and letter of the biblical laws.

In factory farming, for example, crowding together billions of animals in thousands of such facilities is causing massive damage to the environment. Manure, chemical pesticides, and fertilizers are polluting our rivers, lakes, streams, aquifers, and other drinking water sources, killing off fish and wildlife, and causing tragic human health problems such as cancer, miscarriages, and birth defects. Huge amounts of water, energy, and grain are being used, and largely wasted, raising cattle, pigs, chickens and other animals, which emit enormous amounts of gases that



cause or exacerbate the civilization-threatening problems of Global Warming and depletion the planet's protective Ozone Layer that makes life on earth possible.

This has thus become one of the great political issues of our day — the massive and increasing destruction of God's Creation, our natural environment. But our environmental crisis has also become a moral and spiritual issue, since it is overwhelming the earth's ability to repair itself, and to support not just wildlife but human life as well. What greater sin could there be than to destroy future generations' ability to live on our planet?

Fortunately, the solution to many of these problems may be found in the doctrines of our ancient Judaic-Christian faith, especially the holiest of our sacred scriptures, the Bible. If adhered to, these teachings, promoting a reverence for the earth and its creatures, could prevent many of the threats to our biological life support systems, and ensure a secure future for humanity on this planet.

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### 3. ANIMAL AGRICULTURE IS A HOLOCAUST

BRANDON BURR, O.D.

In Jewish heritage, the phrase, “never again,” was adopted as a reminder of our responsibility to prevent and speak out against future holocausts. To me, it serves as a universal injunction to prevent all forms of genocide, no matter if the victims are human people or non-human animal people. When I analyze animal agriculture, I see a stark resemblance to The Holocaust, the same holocaust that was denied for so long by otherwise moral human beings.

Throughout World War II, the German citizens knew exactly what was happening to the Jewish people and other enemies of the Nazis. However, it was more convenient for them to deny the concentration camps and extermination camps, which were kept hidden by the SS, in order to protect themselves. It wasn’t until the American soldiers actually showed the German people the concentration camps and extermination camps after their liberations that the Germans started to accept the horrors of what was actually taking place under the Third Reich. Factory farms and slaughterhouses are also concealed to hide their horrific realities. Paul McCartney is credited as saying: “If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian.” When considering the factory farms and slaughterhouses, it’s easier for non-

vegans to make excuses and deny or downplay their atrocities so that they don't have to change their habits. In other words, most people would choose to take the blue pill and live in blissful ignorance, until they are actually given the red pill and shown factory farm and slaughterhouse footage.

The concentration camp prisoners were treated as slaves and forced into labor. Dairy cows today are treated similarly. They are enslaved to go through continuous cycles of artificial insemination, giving birth, having their calves taken away, and producing an unnatural amount of breast milk, causing mastitis, until they are no longer useful and sent to slaughter.

Victims of The Holocaust consisted mainly of Jews, Poles, and homosexuals. The Nazis viewed them as inferior. Animal agriculture discriminates against mostly cows, pigs, and chickens, as they are viewed as nothing more than "food" and "live-stock." It boggles my mind when people say we shouldn't compare racism, xenophobia, or homophobia with speciesism.

They are all forms of discrimination — just different victims.

The mindset that some lives matter and some lives don't is the fundamental root of everything that is wrong in this world. The truth is, most people don't care about genocides, as long as they are not the victims. That is unacceptable to me. So when we say, "never again," do we really mean it? I do.

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## 4. SHOULD HUMANITY GO VEG? MY TOP 12 REASONS TO EAT PLANTS

DAN BROOK, PH.D.

There are many compelling reasons to go veg and there seem to be more all the time. Vegetarians do not eat any meat from any animals (e.g., cows, pigs, chickens, fish, and others); vegans are a stricter subset of vegetarians who in addition to avoiding meat also do not consume any animal products (e.g., no eggs or dairy, as well as no meat, often in addition to no honey, leather, silk, feathers, and wool to minimize animal suffering and exploitation). People who eat these plant-based diets enjoy all sorts of fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts, and seeds.

Here are my top twelve reasons for you to finally get off your good intentions and join me and millions of other people who have changed their lives for the better with a plant-based diet. I encourage you to do further investigation regarding these issues to learn more and make more informed decisions. You could also find — and join! — your local or national vegetarian/vegan society.

**1. Life.** You will eliminate the suffering and save the lives of dozens of animals each year. As Alice Walker poignantly declares, “Animals ... were not made for humans any more than black people were made for

whites or women for men.” Every animal you don’t eat is another life saved and the saving of a single life is the saving of an entire world. The less meat and other animal products that you demand and consume means that less will be produced and supplied. It is literally a matter of life and death; eating animals means you are actively supporting the imprisoning, torturing, and killing of those innocent animals, regardless of intentions or desires. Vegetarians and vegans reduce suffering and save lives every day. It’s really that simple.

**2. Climate.** You will help fight climate change, the #1 threat facing life on Earth, because the livestock industry is the #1 cause of our climate crisis, accounting for over half (51%) of greenhouse gas emissions. “The [biggest] single action that a person can take to reduce carbon emissions,” according to Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, former chair of the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “is vegetarianism.” Climate change is threatening the existence of a wide array of animals and plants as well as hundreds of millions of people. Although we should strongly encourage our governments, businesses, schools, workplaces, unions, religious institutions, restaurants, hotels, and other organizations to be more sustainable, we can easily make dramatic differences in our personal lives by reducing our own carbon footprint and methane mouthprint. Indeed, switching from the Standard American Diet (SAD) to a vegetarian or, better still, vegan diet is more effective in reducing greenhouse gases than switching from an SUV to a hybrid car (and nothing stops us from doing both — and more), as doing so can at least halve your greenhouse gas emissions. Plant-strong is planet-friendly, so delete meat to reduce the heat. We can effectively fight global climate change with our forks, knives, spoons, and chopsticks!

**3. Deforestation.** You will help stop deforestation, especially of the rainforests, which have been called the “lungs of the Earth.” “In a nutshell,” reports the Center for International Forestry Research, “cattle ranchers are making mincemeat out of Brazil’s Amazon rainforests.” The

#1 reason for the clearing of the Amazon Rainforest, accounting for about 80% of the carnage, is for the grazing of cows for the livestock industry. The #2 reason is to grow (often genetically-engineered) soybeans and corn as feed for cows, pigs, and chickens, not food for people. Similar tragic dynamics are destroying forests throughout Latin America, Africa, and Asia, having already done so in most of North America, Europe, and Australia. The livestock industry is slashing and burning the rainforests in the pursuit of cheap meat and high profits, reducing these amazingly biodiverse, beautiful, and breathing forests into carbon dioxide and cholesterol, thereby simultaneously imperiling the global environment, precious habitats, endangered species, local communities, indigenous cultures, people's health, potential medicines, and aesthetic beauty. Shrimp farms and fish farms are doing similar things with mangroves and other underwater forests. This is a crime against nature, animals, and ourselves, but we can stop this ecocide with the power of plants.

**4. Biodiversity.** You will help preserve biodiversity by eating a plant-based diet. Biodiversity, the accumulated evolutionary wealth of nature, is evidence of a healthy ecosystem. Biodiversity is also beautiful. The meat industry engages in deforestation, soil erosion, air and water pollution, negatively affecting flora and fauna, thereby decreasing biodiversity through species endangerment and extinction. When you eat plant-based foods, you save not only the lives of farmed animals, but also the lives of wild animals whose habitats are destroyed by deforestation, expanded farmland, and agro-industrial practices and pollution (e.g., bears, birds, frogs, butterflies, fish, and more), as well as the systematic targeting of animals who compete for food with or prey upon farmed animals (especially wolves, coyotes, and bobcats, though many others as well). If you care about nature and love animals, don't eat them. Thrive and let thrive.

**5. Health.** You will greatly improve your health, and the health of your family, by reducing the unnecessary tragedies of heart disease (the #1 cause of death in the U.S., accounting for as much as 40% of all deaths)

and cancer (the #2 cause of death), as well as stroke, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, gout, kidney disease, osteoporosis, even Alzheimer's Disease, and other serious ailments. People who make the switch to plant-based eating often lose weight easily, reduce their cholesterol and inflammation, have more energy, and feel and look better, thereby also reducing the odds of various other health problems. Many people have been able to reverse obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer by eliminating animal foods from their diet.

While animal foods have excess protein, saturated fat, and unwanted cholesterol, they contain zero fiber and zero anti-oxidants. In stark contrast, plant foods have vitamins, minerals, fiber, phytonutrients, and anti-oxidants, while never containing any cholesterol. Michael Roizen, M.D. says that people can achieve an additional thirteen years of healthy life with a plant-based diet. "People who consume saturated, 4-legged fat have a shorter life span and more disability at the end of their lives," according to Dr. Roizen. "Animal products clog your arteries, zap your energy and slow down your immune system. Meat eaters also experience accelerated cognitive and sexual dysfunction at a younger age."

The best healthcare reform you can make in your personal life is preventive care by eating a plant-based diet. Prevention of disease is far preferable — and much cheaper, easier, safer, and more pleasurable — than treatment of those often-debilitating and deadly diseases. Be plant strong to protect and increase your strength and health. Health is wealth — enhance yours with healthier food choices.

**6. Public Health.** You will not only increase your own health by eating a plant-based diet, but you will also protect and promote public health. The hunt for meat in Africa, for example, has led to the emergence and spread of HIV/AIDS and ebola, what some have called the "revenge of the rainforest." The 95-99% of meat and other animal products in the U.S., which comes from frightening factory farms, with its high concentration of animals and overuse of hormones and antibiotics —



about 3/4 of all antibiotics in the U.S. are pumped into livestock — leads to deadly antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections, such as MRSA. Indeed, antibiotic-resistant, flesh-eating MRSA now annually kills many more Americans than AIDS!

The production and distribution of meat is associated with E. coli, bird flu, swine flu (which started on a hog farm in North Carolina), mad cow disease, SARS, the so-called Spanish Flu (which started on a chicken farm in Kansas), and COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps we can take a hint from nature that most contagious diseases originated in animals, while most medicines originated in plants.

Dr. Gauden Galea, the World Health Organization Representative in China, states that “As long as people eat meat, there is going to be some risk of infection. They aren’t just risking themselves but also risking the life of others who don’t eat meat.” Writing for Harvard Political Review, Joseph Winters makes the case that this “pandemic provides an opportunity to more deeply interrogate the structural injustice of this system. It is animal agriculture that is wrong.” You can help protect community health and help prevent future epidemics and pandemics with veg eating.

**7. Hunger.** You will reduce world hunger by eating lower on the food chain. In the words of Chrissie Hynde, “Global hunger could be directly attributed to meat-eating.” While millions of people annually die from over-consumption, particularly consumption of fat and cholesterol, as well as sugar and salt, millions of excluded people annually die from under-consumption, from starvation and hunger-related diseases. Although the world produces more than enough food to feed all its people, the inequality of wealth and power, along with the inefficiency of land use, crop production, and food distribution, creates conditions that lead to food scarcity, chronic hunger, malnutrition, starvation, environmental degradation, and ethnic violence. Feeding crops — corn, soy, wheat, oats, alfalfa, potatoes, etc. — to animals raised for meat instead of to hungry people is another dimension of immorality of

animal agriculture.

World hunger is neither necessary, automatic, nor inevitable. Plant-based diets create conditions that are more fair and just, as well as more efficient and sustainable, thereby potentially allowing more people to be fed. The current food system inefficiently uses land, grain, water, labor, chemicals, energy, and other vital resources to produce food to be fed to animals that are later killed and fed to those people who can afford it and demand it, thereby skewing the market to the detriment of those who are poor and hungry. Therefore, vegetarianism and veganism can help ease the world hunger problem.

**8. Water.** You will help conserve one of our most precious resources: water, something we literally cannot live without. Half the fresh water in the U.S. is used and wasted by the livestock industry and half the waterways in the U.S. are polluted by the livestock industry. It takes thousands of gallons (several thousand liters) of water to produce a single pound of beef — more than a hundred times than what is needed for wheat, for example — and the amount of water used for one entire cow is literally enough to float a naval destroyer. The water it takes to produce just a couple pounds (1 kg.) of beef is more than the amount of water an average person uses to shower for an entire year. In *The Food Revolution*, John Robbins states that “There is no other single action that is as effective at saving water as eating a plant-based diet.” If you eat meat, you are squandering this vital resource, but you don’t have to.

**9. Social Justice.** You will promote social justice by choosing plants. Eating meat and other animal products contributes to confinement, cruelty, torture, rape, terror, and other forms of violence against animals, who, just like you, want pleasure and to avoid pain, while seeking to preserve their lives. Every year, billions of individual animals (millions per day!) are imprisoned, tortured, and killed in a variety of horrible and sickening ways. For example, lambs are shackled and boxed to keep them “tender”, cows and pigs are crammed for “efficiency,” chickens are de-beaked to “protect” them, animals are branded, docked, castrated,

beaten, and hung upside-down by their limbs — all without anesthesia. Entire schools of fish are netted along with turtles, dolphins, whales, sharks, seals, birds, and others (killing these creatures mercilessly and indiscriminately, not to mention the other “by-catch”). Animals are terrorized and slaughtered with their blood, guts, pus, saliva, sweat, vomit, tears, hair, mucus, semen, urine, and feces being splattered everywhere, some left to suffer and die in piles of other dead and dying animals. Female animals are often impregnated by artificial insemination on “rape racks,” as they are called by the livestock industry, repeatedly forced to endure anxiety, pain, and then pregnancy, with their newborns taken from them shortly after birth, further adding to the trauma for these gentle, innocent animals.

The effects on the workers who torture and kill these animals, as with many soldiers and executioners, cannot be underestimated, with many suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, repetitive stress injuries, and accidental amputations. Sociologists have studied the “brutalization effect”, whereby people increasingly feel free to commit violence when it seems legitimated. Further, slaughterhouses are also one of the most dangerous workplaces for humans, disproportionately staffed by people of color, often recent immigrants with less knowledge, fewer opportunities, and less ability to form a union or complain about their unjust and dangerous conditions. According to Eric Schlosser in *Fast Food Nation*, “at least 1/3 of meat packing workers are injured every year.” Human Rights Watch calls meat packing “the most dangerous factory job in America.”

“We treat animals how we used to treat human slaves. What possible justification could there be for that?” writes Prof. Gary Francione in “One Right For All.” Like racism, sexism, homophobia, antisemitism, and islamophobia, we engage in unfair and unjust speciesism, and indeed a form of fascism, when we treat (and eat) animals as means to our selfish ends, simply because we have the physical force, coercive power, and selfish desire to do so. If we are rightly outraged at the occasional abuse of cats, dogs, and elephants, for

example, we should be likewise outraged at the daily abuse, torture, suffering, and murder of farm animals for food.

**10. Membership.** You will be in good company. Many of the world's greatest minds have been vegetarian or vegan: Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Buddha, Ovid, Plutarch, Leonardo da Vinci, John Milton, Voltaire, Isaac Newton, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Catherine of Siena, Alexander Pope, Mary Wollstonecraft, Benjamin Franklin, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Leo Tolstoy, Clara Barton, Johnny Appleseed, George Bernard Shaw, Susan B. Anthony, Thomas Edison, Mohandas Gandhi, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Nikola Tesla, Rabindranath Tagore, Louisa May Alcott, H.G. Wells, Upton Sinclair, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, Linus Pauling, Franz Kafka, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Rosa Parks, Benjamin Spock, Jane Goodall, Thich Nhat Hanh, J.M. Coetzee, Rainer Maria Rilke, Bob Marley, Elie Wiesel, Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, the Dalai Lama, Carl Sagan, John Rawls, Aung San Su Kyi, Gloria Steinem, Paul McCartney, Greta Thunberg, "Lisa Simpson," and many, many more. While meat is dead, plant-based eating is alive and thriving! Join us. (For what it's worth, Hitler was not a vegetarian, despite Goebbels' Nazi propaganda based on the occasional avoidance of some meats, but Hippocrates, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and Abraham Lincoln may have been.)

**11. Ethics in Action.** You will be "walking the walk" and living your ideals, as well as the highest ideals of all major religions, which teach respect for life, compassion for other living beings, protection of the weak, practicing kindness, promotion of justice, and peace in the world, in addition to many philosophies, which support non-violence, the greater good, positive ethics, personal integrity, ecological sustainability, social justice, and so on. As Gregory Dicum states, "Vegetarianism is a simple idea — don't eat animals — with an ancient pedigree." Veganism takes this idea further. Live your highest ideals, not just your fears or your tired, old habits. Animal agriculture is immoral; your meals don't have to be.

**12. Feelings.** You will feel better emotionally and spiritually, knowing that you are part of the solution, not part of the problem anymore, thereby doing what's best for you and your family, for the animals, for your community, and for our environment, while feeling good. Eating veg is a feel good diet.

**13. More.** In the spirit of generosity, I offer a baker's dozen. Even if you don't need any more reasons to be plant strong, you might still be curious. If that's the case, please read Vegetarian Times' "Why Go Veg," where you can also learn about losing weight, saving money, and avoiding chemicals.

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## **5. CONTEMPORARY ANIMAL AGRICULTURE IS IMMORAL**

RABBI DAVID ROSEN

The Hebrew Bible describes every sentient creature as a “nefesh chayah,” a living soul. In the primordial paradise, the Garden of Eden, the first humans live on a plant diet. Genesis makes clear that this is the ideal. Moreover, the vision of a redeemed society, the Messianic Age, is portrayed but the prophet Isaiah as one in which “the wolf lies down with the lamb, the kid with the lion ... and no harm no destruction shall take place throughout my holy mountain.” The Bible makes it clear that the consumption of animal flesh is a concession after the great flood and the corruption of humankind. Indeed, the language of concession is explicit “if you say I will eat meat because you lust to eat meat” etc.

Aside from the concession to human indulgence, there were probably times and places in the history of the Jewish people where and when it would have been very difficult to obtain adequate plant-based sustenance. This is no longer the case today for the vast majority of people.

Nevertheless, the conditions under which Judaism allowed for the consumption of animals to take place are strict and demanding.

Many rabbinic commentators saw the religious dietary laws as a way to wean people off the consumption of animal products; and the dietary laws are presented both in the Talmud and by medieval (as well as modern) rabbinic commentators as seeking to instill moral virtues through minimizing animal suffering and increasing mindfulness.

Indeed, Judaism categorically forbids gratuitous cruelty to sentient beings, but contemporary animal agriculture involves nothing less than the most flagrant gratuitous cruelty.

In the past, animals slaughtered for consumption typically were raised on private farms, under relatively humane conditions. Nevertheless, in modern society, this has changed and “factory farms,” produce beef cattle by the millions and fowl by the billions every year for human consumption.

Because factory farming is a business, its goal is to maximize production and, consequently, profit. Accordingly, animals are seen as nothing more than mere commodities. They are bred, fed, confined, and drugged in order to birth more offspring, die with more meat on their bones, lay more eggs, etc. Farmers cut costs by keeping animals in extremely confined and segregated conditions. As a result, animals experience intense stress that leads to unnatural aggression. To curb this aggression and prevent animals from damaging one another they are de-horned, typically without anesthetic. To protect the animals from the bacteria-full air in their restricted confines and to stimulate aberrant growth, farmers routinely administer drugs and hormones to animals, which are passed on to the meat-eating public.

The consequences of agribusiness are institutionalized animal cruelty, environmental destruction, resource depletion, and health dangers. Dairy cows live in crowded pens or barns with concrete floors. They are forced to produce ten times more milk than they would produce in nature and as a result, experience numerous health problems. After dairy cows give birth, their calves are immediately separated from them, a practice which causes great distress (cows can be heard



bellowing for their young.) They are then milked, re-inseminated, their calves taken away again and milked continuously until they are exhausted. Cows normally live 20 to 25 years or more; dairy cows are slaughtered when they are three or five years old.

Male calves are raised for both beef and veal. Veal calves live in particularly small confines and are often chained. They are fed a milk substitute deficient in iron and fiber. In other words, they are deliberately kept anemic and their muscles are atrophied so that their flesh will be pale and tender. They never see the sun or have contact with the natural vegetation. Ten percent of veal cows die in confinement.

Furthermore, farmers get more money for chickens with enlarged thighs and breasts. As a result, they breed the animals to be so heavy that their bones cannot support their weight. Consequently, the chickens have difficulty standing, and their legs often break. Like other factory-farmed animals, broiler chickens are raised in such overcrowded enclosures that they become aggressive. To stop them from fighting with one another, their beaks and toes are cut off *without* anesthetic — a painful practice that involves slicing through bone, cartilage, and soft tissue. Some cannot eat after being "de-beaked" and starve to death.

In the case of egg-producing chickens, newborn chicks are placed on a conveyor belt where a worker picks each one up to see if it is male or female. Newborn males are placed in trash bags and suffocated, crushed, or ground up alive. Newborn females are placed back on the belt. The next worker then picks up the female chick, holds her up to a machine's hot iron that cuts off her beak, and then places her back on the belt. Approximately one in five dies of stress and disease. Others are ground up and turned into animal feed on site. Layer hens are exposed to light constantly so that they will lay more eggs. At the end of their laying cycle, they are killed or subjected to "forced molting," a process that entails withholding food and water for up to eighteen days and keeping them in darkness so that their bodies are shocked into another laying cycle; many of these birds die from fatigue. Hens normally live

fifteen to twenty years. Layer hens are slaughtered when they are one to two years old

In addition to the prohibition against gratuitous cruelty to animals, Judaism teaches that we must protect our own health, avoid waste of natural resources, and that we have an obligation to protect our natural environment.

As indicated, the products of animal agriculture poses serious dangers to human health, especially through the intensive use of antibiotics passed on in animal products to humans. Zoonotic diseases have been a primary source of modern pandemics and the emergence of superbugs. In addition, intensive factory farming has become the biggest threat to the global environment through deforestation for animal feed production; unsustainable use of water for feed-crops, and pollution of soil, water and air from fertilizer and manure; land degradation and the loss of biodiversity.

There can be no justification for the immoralities involved in animal agriculture today, and to be party to the purchase or sale of such products is to be an accessory to the criminal acts and consequences involved in this destructive industry.

## **6. EMPLOYING EUPHEMISM TO FALSIFY THE FATE OF FARMED ANIMALS**

KAREN DAVIS, PH.D.

**“If the power of discourse lies in its inevitable  
restructuring and re-creation of reality, the ability of  
human beings to offer counterinterpretations places  
inevitable limits on the exercise of that power.**

**Animals, however, never talk back.”**

**– Harriet Ritvo,**

*The Animal Estate* <sup>[1]</sup>

**“The animal’s life and destiny are under the  
control of the symbolic signs of others.”**

**– Roberta Kalechofsky,**

*Animal Suffering and the Holocaust* <sup>[2]</sup>

Degradation of nonhuman animals, in both word and deed, is inherent in raising them for human consumption. Their food is chosen; their social, familial, and physical environment is controlled; their reproductive organs and activities are manipulated; their bodies are genetically reconstructed to maximize “food” traits; and they are

physically mutilated without painkillers. How long they live is determined by humans. They can be abused and killed at will based on economic “necessity.” An example in poultry and egg production is the routine culling – intentional killing – of birds who are not gaining weight fast enough or laying enough eggs to justify their existence economically.

The physical degradation of farmed animals is matched by the rhetoric of exploitation whereby their identity and what is done to them are cast in a language of falsification to facilitate the animal farming enterprise. Trapped in a world which their psyches did not emanate and which they do not understand, farmed animals are imprisoned in a belittling concept of who they are. Humans, by virtue of a shared verbal language, can aggressively challenge the degradation of their identity and abusers’ lies about how they are treated. By contrast, a nonhuman animal, such as a chicken, is powerless, short of advocacy intercession, to protect her identity and render her experience truthfully, as when she is characterized by her abusers as an “egg-laying machine” or a “broiler” that doesn’t suffer.

Falsification of farmed animals’ identity and experience is expressed through the euphemistic vocabulary of farmed animal production and destruction. In this discussion, I draw particular attention to the euphemistic term *euthanasia*. Agribusiness representatives, government agencies, and industry veterinarians employ this term to describe – disguise – the killings that, in addition to slaughterhouse slaughter (euphemized as “processing” and “meatpacking”) are conducted by farm workers and hired crews at the behest of whoever owns the animals, with occasional news media coverage in terms that whitewash the reality. The American Veterinary Medical Association’s *Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals*, while rightly defining euthanasia as a “good death,” makes all kinds of allowances for situations in which inhumane killing may be considered “euthanasia.” [3]

An example can be seen in “Water Based-Foam Depopulation of

Poultry as a Disease Control Method,” which cites AVMA support for this U.S. Department of Agriculture-approved method of mass-suffocation of poultry:

Euthanasia of large numbers of birds in a quick, efficient manner with welfare consideration. The process is used to control disease spread or end suffering of dying birds during disease outbreak or natural disaster situations. <sup>[4]</sup>

According to Merriam-Webster, ‘*Euphemism*’ derives from the Greek word *euphēmos*, which means ‘auspicious’ or ‘sounding good.’ The first part of ‘*euphēmos*’ is the Greek prefix *eu-*, meaning ‘well.’ The second part is ‘*phēmē*,’ a Greek word for ‘speech’ that is itself a derivative of the verb *phanai*, meaning ‘to speak.’ Among the numerous linguistic cousins of ‘*euphemism*’ on the ‘*eu-*’ side of the family are ‘*eulogy*,’ ‘*euphoria*,’ and ‘*euthanasia*’; on the ‘*phanai*’ side, its kin include ‘*prophet*’ and ‘*aphasia*’ (‘loss of the power to understand words’).’’

Speaking of farmed animals, euphemism is the cover-up equivalent of the mass burials of these animals in the ground or the stomach – their “*euthanasia*.” Call it collusion, conspiracy, complacency or corruption, a pact between agribusiness and the major news media guarantees that the animals will not truly be seen, heard or empathized with. A stock photo or video clip of a piglet “*nursery*,” a “*meatpacking*” plant or a “*poultry processing*” plant does not enlighten a public content to let industry and the media interpret the meaning of these images. See, for example, “*Millions of Pigs Will Be Euthanized as Pandemic Cripples Meatpacking Plants*.” <sup>[5]</sup>

Though current society seems to have forgotten that the word “*euthanasia*” means, literally, a good death, or to die well –*exemplifying a “loss of the power to understand words”* – there’s a kind of implicit social agreement that this term can magically relieve us of culpability for inflicting horrible death and atrocity on innocent nonhuman creatures. Between December 2014 and June 2015, more than 33 million chickens, turkeys, and ducks were suffocated to death with firefighting foam and

carbon dioxide in the Midwestern states of Iowa, Minnesota, and elsewhere in response to the avian influenza epidemic that began on poultry farms in 2014.

Media reports of the reign of terror – in which the birds were attacked by death squads, shoved into kill carts, and suffocated to death slowly with carbon dioxide and fire-fighting foam – referred to these episodes of mass-extinction as euthanasia, without quotation marks, that is, without irony. Channeling the mentality of agribusiness, a *New York Times* article, “Egg Farms Hit Hard as Bird Flu Affects Millions of Hens,” empathized with farmers “forced to euthanize their own live inventory.” [6]

The poultry industry uses three methods to destroy thousands and millions of birds at a time in response to a disease outbreak, a natural disaster, or, in the case of the coronavirus outbreak, because there weren’t enough workers to slaughter and process the birds due to coronavirus-related worker shortages. The industry term for the mass-destruction or removal from one farm site to another location of chickens, turkeys, and other “food” birds is “depopulation.”

The three depopulation methods are ventilation shutdown, fire-fighting foam, and carbon dioxide poisoning. In the first case, the birds die slowly of heat stress and suffocation, by being deprived of air in the sheds with the temperature intentionally turned up. In the second case, they suffocate to death by being smothered under a rolling carpet of fire-fighting foam. In the third case, they suffocate painfully and slowly to death of carbon dioxide poisoning, administered to them through hoses with a force that can simultaneously burn and freeze their lungs as described in “Mass Depopulation of Poultry as a Disease Control Method.” [7] For more, see “Mass Destruction of Sick and Unwanted Birds.” [8]

In contrast to misusing the term *euthanasia* to describe the mass-killing of farmed animals and laboratory animals, awareness of its true meaning persists in society, as is evident in the fact that we do not call

mass-killing, live burial, suffocation, throat-cutting, gassing, paralytic electric shock and the like “euthanasia” in the case of ourselves. No one refers to ethnic cleansing as “euthanasia.” Speciesism is not a mere abstract concept. It’s the wellspring of our attitude toward nonhuman animals. It determines the fate we subject them to and our language of justification.

I suspect that once the coronavirus news cycle has passed, the sympathetic media attention being paid to the plight of “meatpackers” and “processors” will dissipate. For the animals, nothing will change, since the major media, aligned with the spirit and dictates of agribusiness, have shown them no mercy, compassion or acknowledgement to begin with. The occasional op-ed expressing compassion for our animal victims is overwhelmed by the standardized coverage. A rare exception is “Our Cruel Treatment of Animals Led to the Coronavirus” by philosopher David Benatar, published in *The New York Times* on April 13, 2020. <sup>[9]</sup>

Another exception is novelist Jonathan Safran Foer’s “The End of Meat Is Here,” published in *The New York Times* on May 21, 2020. <sup>[10]</sup> Foer, the author of *Eating Animals*, writes surprisingly, given his investigative knowledge of the life of farmed animals as “woven through with misery,” that sick workers, plant shutdowns, and a backlog of animals “forced” some farmers to “euthanize their animals, often by gassing or shooting them.” This false characterization by an animal advocate helps to instill in the public mind our species’ radical disconnection, emotionally and ethically, from nonhuman animals, whose lives we devalue and insult with such thoughtless language.

A May 4, 2020 article in the *Progressive Farmer*, “Hard Decisions: How Consumers View Mass Depopulation,” <sup>[11]</sup> prompted by a United Poultry Concerns press release, “‘Depopulation’ of Poultry Does not Mean ‘Humanely Killed,’” <sup>[12]</sup> bypasses the animals and their plight, focusing instead on how to manage the negative publicity of “mass depopulation.” An industry representative is quoted: “producers should

expect to see visuals hitting the news and social media that will be shocking.”

Actually, this prediction is what has *not* happened. Farmers needn’t worry that the major news media will blow their cover. Or that “visuals,” if shown, would shock a public worried about not having enough “meat” on the table – a worry amped up by the media. As for social media, these outlets seem mainly to attract those who already care strongly one way or the other.

So what’s a farmer to do? Advises the industry representative: “[S]hare that this is an incredible crisis for you and your family just like it is for families all around the world. Share the fact that you are an animal lover and have dedicated your life to spending more time with animals than humans. Remind people you are just one person in a community of farmers all dealing with this heartbreaking reality.”

But what, for the farmer, or the corporation, is the “crisis,” the “heartbreaking reality”? It can’t be what the animals are being put through, since for them a terrible death and its attendant pain and terror await regardless. More to the point, the “crisis” is the loss of income, the “waste” and disposal of animals whose purpose, from the farming perspective, is to become a marketable product.

Back in the days when I attended farm animal “welfare” conferences, I used to wonder, listening to the speakers and watching their slides, “Do they honestly, personally believe that the filthy, cobwebby, manure-filled buildings, cages and related contrivances of cruelty to chickens constitute welfare?” To what extent, I wondered, did self-deception figure in the professional deception that relies on euphemisms, including that the captive birds are “happy,” “content,” and “singing,” and that corporations like Perdue Farms, Cal-Maine, and Tyson Foods “care” about their animals.

Currently, some animal advocates seek to turn agribusiness adversaries into allies in an effort to change the chicken industry from



maniacally cruel to marginally kinder. This includes encouraging receptive farmers to transition from raising chickens to pursuing a livelihood in plant-based agriculture. The ultimate goal of this ambition is to reverse the business of transforming plants into “chicken” by transforming “chicken” into plants. Real chickens in this remake no longer figure in the plant-based versions of themselves, or in the cellular meat versions that are being developed, in which the components of their flesh are constituted for mass-production without any involvement of actual chickens in the process.

These metamorphic efforts, in which language and reality are mutually transformative for better or worse, remind me a little of how in ancient Greek and Roman mythology, people seek to transform the goddesses of vengeance and retribution, known as the Erinyes or Furies, by giving them the euphemistic name Eumenides, meaning “the Kindly Ones.” Something to remember about the Furies, though, is that they personify guilt and the pursuit of justice in the wake of murder and other crimes, so transforming them into “the Kindly Ones” amounts to a euphemistic subterfuge to avoid moral reckoning.

The carefully constructed obliteration of our animal victims from the coronavirus coverage and from all of our abusiveness toward them, linguistically and literally, shows how casually we turn our Furies into “Kindly Ones” where other species are concerned. In these instances, “the Kindly Ones” function as a disabled conscience. With our words of commission and omission we muzzle our guilt – the condition of guilt we refuse to feel. The animals are being euthanized – put to sleep – so we can rest easy and return to normal.

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## 7. WHY ANIMAL AGRICULTURE IS IMMORAL

JASON GLASSON

“13<sup>TH</sup>” <sup>[1]</sup>, directed by Ava DuVernay, examines how the high rate of incarceration in America is driven by the country's history of racial inequality.

In the comments following the film, this phrase by Mark Johnson stood out to me: “Injustice to anyone is morally depraved.” <sup>[2]</sup>

This is an incisive comment that immediately rings true, that feels ‘right’. Let us look at what ‘moral’ and ‘injust’ actually mean.

Asking Google to define ‘just’, we learn that ‘just’ is what is morally right and fair.

Asking Google to define ‘moral’, we learn that it is to do with principles of right and wrong.

And to be depraved is to be morally corrupt. So to engage in injustice is to have completely lost sight of the moral compass of what is right, and what is fair.

It seems reasonable to say that what is for the welfare and well-

being of all can be said to be fair and therefore 'right'. And that what is for the detriment of all and the well-being of none can be said to be unfair and certainly very 'wrong'.

To deliberately engage in unfair actions that harm all concerned could definitely be said to be morally depraved.

So let us look at who experiences harm due to the practice of animal agriculture.

Here, I am not referring to the small-scale traditional animal agriculture of village and tribal life, but rather to the industrial scale raising and slaughtering of land-based animals for profit.

A stakeholder is anyone, be they "either an individual, a group or an organization impacted by the outcome of a project."<sup>[3]</sup>

As will be shown below, industrial scale animal agriculture impacts every single person on the planet, as well as every animal on the planet, as well as every living being, eco-system and habitat on the planet. In that sense, the entire planetary system and all life on Earth are stakeholders in industrial scale animal agriculture. Let us look at each group of stakeholders in turn and the impact this has upon them:

- A. The Entire Planetary System
- B. Human Beings
- C. Animals involved in industrial scale animal agriculture
- D. Animals impacted by industrial scale animal agriculture

### **A. The Entire Planetary System**

The ocean accounts for more than 70% of the surface of the planet and contains 97% of the Earth's water.<sup>[4]</sup> The oceans "also regulate the global climate; they mediate temperature and drive the weather, determining rainfall, droughts, and floods."<sup>[5]</sup>

Any harm to the ocean will have enormous detrimental effects to

the planetary system as a whole. And we can see very clearly that industrial scale animal agriculture has very negative effects upon our oceans.

For example, there is a very clear link between pollution, ocean dead zones and animal agriculture.

Callum Roberts, Professor of Marine Conservation at the University of York, UK informs us in The Guardian article: 'Industrial meat production is killing our seas. It's time to change our diets' that the ocean has more than 550 coastal dead zones, areas that support little to no life due to lack of oxygen. <sup>[6]</sup>

Combined, these 'dead zones' cover a staggering 250,000 square kilometers [96,526 square miles]. <sup>[7]</sup>

The cause of these dead zones is clearly linked to both the animals intensively raised to become food in 'factory farms' and the crops intensively grown to feed them. For instance, a report by global campaign organisation Mighty Earth has clearly shown that "when excess fertilizer and manure wash off fields that grow feed, they contaminate local drinking water and create toxic algae blooms that cause vast Dead Zones that are toxic to aquatic life in the Gulf of Mexico, Chesapeake Bay, and Great Lakes." <sup>[8]</sup>

Apart from the ocean, intensive animal agriculture is causing major problems on land too. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) clearly states:

"Over the past quarter century, forests have been cleared from an area the size of India. Particularly in Central and South America, expansion of pastures for livestock production has been one of the driving forces behind this wholesale destruction. Deforestation causes incalculable environmental damage, releasing billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and driving

thousands of species of life to extinction each year.” [9]

In fact, “Cattle ranching is the largest driver of deforestation in every Amazon country, accounting for 80% of current deforestation rates.” [10]

Our planet’s soils, too, are being degraded at unsustainable rates. A major contributor to this degradation is livestock, as this article by Earth Policy Institute informs us:

“[T]he world’s ever-growing herds of cattle, sheep, and goats are converting vast stretches of grassland to desert...[I]n the end the only viable way to eliminate overgrazing on the earth’s rangelands is to balance the size of flocks and herds with nature’s capacity for regrowth.” [11]

The planet’s precious water is severely impacted by intensive animal agriculture also.

“Crops grown to supply meat production consume vast quantities of fertilisers, herbicides, fungicides and pesticides, much of which wash into streams and rivers, and then downstream to the sea. Indoor animals are pumped full of veterinary drugs to counter the disease risks of high-density living. The drugs find their way into watercourses from urine, manure and abattoir waste.” [6]

Finally, the animal agriculture sector has been estimated to play a very significant role in Greenhouse Gas emissions, both directly through emissions and indirectly through large-scale deforestation and forest burning. Taking both into account, it is estimated by Robert Goodland, environmental risk specialist employed by both the World Bank and International Finance Corporation “that livestock products account for at least 51% of anthropogenic greenhouse-gas emissions.” [12]

It is clear that a million species are facing extinction in the next



few decades; extinctions are occurring at an unprecedented rate in human history. <sup>[13]</sup> And the major drivers of such extinctions are destruction and fragmentation of habitats, direct exploitation like fishing and hunting, chemical pollution, invasive species, and human-caused global warming. <sup>[14]</sup>

As previously discussed, habitat destruction through deforestation is driven primarily by the expansion of animal agriculture. Animal agriculture also plays, again as discussed above, a very significant role in chemical pollution and in human-caused global warming. So in at least 3 of the 5 drivers of species extinction animal agriculture plays a major role.

It is now clear, from just these examples alone, that perhaps the major stakeholder in intensive animal agriculture, the planet Earth itself, is very negatively impacted by animal agriculture.

## **B. Human Beings**

Let us now look briefly at how industrial scale animal agriculture affects the Human population of planet Earth. It is a major driver of human caused climate change, linked to such detrimental effects as increased hurricanes and floods, heatwaves, droughts and wildfires, sea-level rise and oceanic acidification. <sup>[15]</sup> This means no person on the planet is immune from or is untouched by climate change.

Separate from its climate impact, in America for example: “Demand for feed crops is driving widespread water contamination across the country, destroying America’s last native prairies, and releasing potent greenhouse gases.” Indeed, it is leading “to manure and fertilizer pollution pouring into waterways from the Heartland down to the Gulf states.” <sup>[8]</sup>

It is a major determinant of poor health outcomes throughout the world. A recent study looked at “evidence from large prospective US and European cohort studies and from meta-analyses of epidemiological

studies” and concluded that:

“the long-term consumption of increasing amounts of red meat and particularly of processed meat is associated with an increased risk of total mortality, cardiovascular disease, colorectal cancer and type 2 diabetes.” [16]

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine tells us clearly that “milk and other dairy products are the top source of **saturated fat** in the American diet, contributing to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and Alzheimer’s disease. Studies have also linked dairy to an **increased risk** of breast, ovarian, and prostate cancers.” [17]

When it comes to Alzheimer’s (AD): “Studies show that risk for AD is greater in people who consume high amounts of cholesterol, saturated fat, and excess calories and low amounts of fiber, vegetables, and fruits.” [18] So it appears that there are substantial negative effects to the consumption of animal products.

The workers involved in the production and slaughter of animals for consumption also experience terrible working conditions and poor physical and mental health outcomes. Meatpacking is “far and away the most dangerous profession in the United States.” [19]

“Research has shown the occupational hazards faced by abattoir workers include:

- intense noise which can result in noise-induced hearing loss
- extreme temperatures and the risks of frostbite and hypothermia
- upper limb work-related musculoskeletal disorders
- exposure to harsh chemicals and bacteria, viruses, fungi and ectoparasites.” [20]

One study “noted relatively high levels of anxiety, anger, hostility and

psychoticism among slaughterhouse workers.” [20]

For human beings, drastic climate change, pollution, and poor health outcomes are all linked to consumption of animal products.

### C. Animals involved in industrial scale animal agriculture

Intensive animal agriculture involves almost unimaginable levels of cruelty. It is impossible in this brief article to document fully the degradations involved for every animal consumed for its flesh, slaughtered for its by-products or utilized in animal experimentation. Suffice it to mention briefly that 80 billion land-based animals die each year for their flesh, [21] which does not include the vast numbers slaughtered as part of the cosmetic, medical or egg industries.

This table [22] lays out starkly the unconscionable deprivation of the basic right to life associated with raising animals for slaughter:

Animal	Typical Slaughter Age	Natural Life Span
Chickens (male in egg industry)	1 day	Up to 8 years
“Veal” calves	1-24 weeks	15-20 years
Chickens (broilers / meat breeds)	5-7 weeks	Up to 8
Ducks	7-8 weeks	6-8 years
Rabbits	10-12 weeks	8-12 years
Goats	12-20 weeks	12-14 years
Geese	15-20 weeks	8-15 years
Turkeys	4-5 months	Up to 15
Pigs	5-6 months	10-12 years
Lambs	6-8 months	12-14 years
“Beef” cattle	18 months	15-20 years
Chickens (egg laying hens)	18 months	Up to 8 years
Pigs (breeding sows)	3-5 years	10-12 years
Dairy cows	4 years	15-20 years

Add to this picture the actual state of a meat (‘broiler’) chicken during its very brief life. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty

to Animals (RSPCA) tells us that welfare problems associated with being bred for extremely rapid growth “include leg disorders, a condition called ‘ascites’ (accumulation of fluid in the abdominal cavity) and heart failure. Birds often become so heavy that they suffer from leg weakness and joint problems. Their legs may be unable to support them, leaving them unable to access food and water. Birds can also suffer from hock [that is, ‘ankle’], breast and foot burns due to contact with damp litter [their bedding is covered in wet chicken poo].” <sup>[23]</sup>

It would take too long for this article to properly describe the atrocious conditions meat animals such as pigs and chickens are kept in. Please see this excellent Aussie Farms knowledgebase <sup>[24]</sup> for full details.

In particular, this page <sup>[25]</sup> shows that the treatment of pigs in Australian agriculture is particularly appalling.

#### **D. Animals impacted by industrial scale animal agriculture**

As mentioned above, extinction and habitat loss through deforestation have terrible impacts on wild animals. Another cause of impact is the direct killing of wildlife to support animal agriculture:

“Wild animals suffer not only the collateral damage of meat-related deforestation, drought, pollution and climate change, but also direct targeting by the meat industry. From grazing animals to predators, native species are frequently killed to protect meat-production profits. Grass-eating species such as elk, deer and pronghorn have been killed en masse to reserve more feed for cattle. Important habitat-creating animals such as beavers and prairie dogs have been decimated because they disrupt the homogenous landscapes desired by livestock managers.

‘Predator control’ programs designed to protect the livestock industry helped drive keystone predators like

California grizzly bears and Mexican gray wolves extinct in their ecosystems.” [26]

## **Conclusion**

Four Stakeholders in intensive animal agriculture have been identified: the planetary eco-system, human beings, animals involved in agriculture, animals impacted by agriculture. It has been demonstrated that each of these stakeholders experiences major, detrimental effects due to intensive animal agriculture. Indeed, that no area of life on earth is unaffected.

As it has been shown that industrial scale animal agriculture truly is for the detriment of all and the well-being of none, it is neither right nor fair. In that sense, industrial scale animal agriculture is immoral.

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## **8. ANIMAL AGRICULTURE: IMMORAL 3,000 YEARS AGO, EVEN MORE IMMORAL TODAY**

JEFFREY SPITZ COHAN

Judaism came into existence about 3,000 years ago as an attempt to bring ethics into the world and to subdue the selfish and destructive tendencies of human beings.

In keeping with that purpose, its foundational document – the Torah – establishes veganism as the ideal diet for humankind.

Think about this for a second. Three thousand years ago, almost three millennia before the onset of factory farming, the author or authors of the Jewish Bible understood that killing animals for food was wrong.

Animal agriculture wasn't ethical then and it certainly isn't ethical now.

In Genesis 1:26, we're told that human beings have dominion over the animals. Contrary to popular belief, "dominion" did not give us license to treat animals any which way we want. In fact, it's part of the exact same verse in which we're told that human beings are created in God's image.

And what does it mean to be created in God's image? The Talmud, the main compendium of rabbinic interpretation of the Torah, explicitly answers the question:

"Just as God is merciful, so shall you be merciful."  
(Sotah 14a)

The killing of animals 3,000 years ago and animal agriculture today are about the furthest thing from mercy.

In Genesis 2, the Bible states that animals were created not as a food source, but as a source of companionship for Adam, the first human being.

### **Companionship, not a commodity**

Let's face it: More than 99 percent of the time, when human beings treat animals as economic commodities, it's very bad news for those animals.

In recognition of this, Jews were given the kosher laws. These laws, in essence, impose numerous rules and restrictions on the killing of animals and eating of meat.

But if these laws were written to reign in the worst excesses of animal agriculture, they have largely failed.

The authors of the kosher laws could not have envisioned a world where kosher meat would come from huge corporations and where animal agriculture would be heavily industrialized.

Or a world where the rabbis who were supposed to enforce these laws would instead turn a blind eye to rampant immorality.

Take the case of Agriprocessors, which was the largest kosher-meat company the world has ever known, and which was under the supervision of the Orthodox Union, the largest certifier of kosher food.

Undercover videos taken in 2004 showed cows bleeding profusely while fully conscious, suffering horribly, in blatant violation of the intent of kosher slaughter.

And there was this:

- Agriprocessors was fined \$600,000 in 2006 for discharging untreated slaughtering wastewater into the Postville sewer system, in violation of Federal and state law.
- Agriprocessors was fined \$9.99 million in 2008 for violations of state labor law, including illegally deducting money from employees for safety equipment and failing to pay employees.
- Finally, in 2010, Agriprocessors CEO Sholom Rubushkin was convicted of financial fraud and sentenced to 27 years in federal prison.

Even in the kosher context, animal agriculture is immoral.

In the Book of Proverbs (12:10), a sacred text common to Jews and Christians, the measuring stick used to gauge a person's ethics is their treatment of animals.

The authors of Proverbs knew that if a person, or business, mistreated animals, they were likely to act immorally in other areas of life as well.

It would be an understatement to say this point was driven home by Agriprocessors.

And the point keeps being driven home.

About a week before this piece was written in the Spring of 2020, the chief executive of one of the country's largest chicken producers was indicted on a price-fixing charge.

Animal agriculture is immoral. The authors of the Bible knew this 3,000 years ago. Will we finally listen?

**Jeffrey Spitz Cohan** is the Executive Director of Jewish Veg. He became a vegetarian in 2007 and a vegan in 2011 after studying what the Torah instructs us about our dietary choices. An experienced public speaker, Jeffrey worked in print and broadcast journalism for 18 years before starting a second career in Jewish communal service. He was the Director of Community Relations for the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh from 2005-2012, then took the helm of Jewish Veg, then known as Jewish Vegetarians of North America, in 2012. Under his leadership, Jewish Veg, a 501c3 nonprofit, has emerged as one of the fastest growing veg-advocacy organizations in the nation. Jeffrey earned a B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master's of Public Management from Carnegie Mellon University. He lives in Pittsburgh, PA, with his wife Kathryn, daughter Kiley, and cats Nala and Crosby.

## 9. WHAT WOULD HOMO AHIMSA\* DO?

JUDY CARMAN

Michael was mowing on a hillside in a forest one day. At the bottom of the hill among the trees was a rocky creek. Thinking he could ride the mower successfully down to the level area above the creek, he began descending the hill. But the path was muddy, the large mower lost traction, and Michael suddenly found himself pinned upon the jagged rocks next to the creek with a five-hundred pound machine on top of him. For a couple of hours, barely able to breathe and sensing that one leg was badly injured, he wondered if he was going to die. When he was finally found, the first thing he wanted was to be touched by another human being. "Please, just hold my hand," he said. It was that touch that sent physical waves of hope and healing through his body. As men gathered to lift the machine and pull him to safety, he knew he would survive, and his gratitude for their compassion and kindness was overwhelming.

Such is humanity at its finest—reaching out, helping, touching, rescuing, bringing hope for an end to extreme suffering and fear of death. At the other end of the human behavior spectrum, we find humanity at its worst in the form of animal agriculture and the extreme abuse of animals in many industries. Instead of rescuing these innocent

and defenseless cousins of ours who have never harmed us, instead of touching them with love and respecting their rights to live and be free, they are brutally killed by the billions at the hands of human beings. Those hands that could bring comfort and compassion, as they did for Michael, instead bring terror, torture, suffering and death without mercy.

What is going on here? How can the same species, indeed some of the same individuals, behave in such opposite ways? Clearly, there is a desire in most human beings to be kind and loving. This yearning is, perhaps, best expressed in the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It is a nearly universally accepted moral value by almost all religions and ethical traditions. Although many of these traditions stop short and apply it only to certain (but not all) human beings, there is no logical, scientific or spiritual justification for limiting it so arbitrarily. But doing so has, for centuries, allowed animal agriculture, slavery, wars, genocide, religious persecution, etc. to proliferate and benefit those in power.

Nevertheless, the Golden Rule still shines like a star, beckoning us toward an ideal to which most, if not all of us, aspire. Certainly, we could not have this as an ideal if we did not believe we could achieve it. Somewhere, deep in our hearts, we long for a chance to express our true and ideal nature all the time toward all sacred life. I believe that time is here now if we will grab the opportunity.

Deep in our souls, we know who we really are and that we are not here on this earth to cause despair, destruction, desecration and death to nature, people and to billions of our fellow earthlings. Animal agriculture, and all that it destroys, shows how far we have fallen from our ideal. Our golden moral compass points us toward a higher consciousness that understands the sacredness and interconnectedness of all life, and we can see, now better than ever before, that, by the law of cause and effect, we ourselves are reaping the same death and suffering that we have sown for others for these many thousands of years.

Animal agriculture is a recent invention of human beings—approximately 10,000 years old. Prior to that, there is anthropological evidence that many human beings lived in small egalitarian, mostly nomadic, bands that did not wage war and did not have weapons of war. Although there were respected elders among the groups, they did not have the authority to force their friends and families into armed conflict. We could say that animal agriculture and war are twins, born together out of the dark shadows of the human psyche.

Ten thousand years later, we live in a world filled with billions of Homo Sapiens, all fully capable of love and compassion. Yet, in spite of our potential for kindness, the world that we have created is one that grows more violent, oppressive, sick and polluted with each passing day. Only Homo Sapiens, and no other living being on earth, is responsible for the devastation caused to our beautiful Earth home and to all living beings who are trying to share this home with us.

Our time is up. We cannot live as Homo Sapiens any longer. That species cannot solve the problems it has created. It is a creature too willing to leave morals and ethics behind, too eager for self-gratification to unfurl its full capacity for love, and too frightened and confused to heal the damage it has done.

We have to evolve now. All because of the actions of Homo Sapiens and only Homo Sapiens, the sixth extinction of animal and plant species accelerates, deserts keep forming where once there were life-giving forests, waters continue to fill with lethal trash and poisons, pandemics proliferate, polluted air toxifies the bodies of all who live here, millions of children and families starve due to animal agriculture and millions of innocent farmed and aquatic animals suffer and die every single day from human violence. We have finally run out of time.

This is a spiritual, moral, ethical, and life or death crisis for us and all species. Governments and giant corporations have no interest in repairing the damage that has brought them so much power, control and wealth. It is absolutely up to us to literally elevate our consciousness and

realize who we really are — Homo Ahimsa. Only with the ethics of nonviolence and unconditional love for all beings can we rise up and heal the wounds we have caused to ourselves, the Earth and all our fellow earthlings.

It is time for all people to take off the masks that we have worn to show our conformity and our willingness to go along with the status quo, for fear of rejection and not fitting in. It is time to get rid of our masks and see how radiantly beautiful we really are. With our masks off, we take a deep breath and we stare this anthropocentric patriarchy in the face and see, really see, this is not what we want. This does not reflect our true nature, and it is killing us and everyone else. What a liberation it is to know that we do not need to live this way. In fact we ourselves can bring in an entirely new way of living and create peace and freedom for all earthlings. Our hearts and our spirits already know the way. This is something remarkable to celebrate!

Animal agriculture, hierarchical domination and war grew up together and fed upon each other. Because all of these dark forces are completely out of alignment with our true nature of lovingkindness and ahimsa, the suffering has been beyond measure. All the domination of women, animals, nature and people considered “other,” has brought us now to the edge of a cliff, but we still have time to choose. We can give up in the face of what seem to be overwhelming odds. Or we can wait for Big Ag, Big Pharma and the military industrial complex to fix it. Or we can seize this amazing opportunity, this big push, this calling to our souls from all the innocent lives hanging in the balance—and reveal ourselves as the radiant, loving beings we truly are.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said, “The present chaos is not the end of the world, but the labor pains of a new earth and a new humanity coming into form.” Our new form is Homo Ahimsa—the one who, not only knows the Golden Rule, but lives by it every day. Deep within, we are not killers. We do not salivate at the sight of a cow or a chicken. In quiet moments, with our minds still and calm, we can feel our sweet



connection to the dog at our side and the birds singing in the trees. Just as Michael needed his hand held so desperately; in their suffering, the animals who are being tortured and killed by people, long for a simple touch, a touch of hope and healing, a touch that says, you are safe now. We are here, not to harm you, but to free you.

When we think about it, eating plant-based food and living by vegan values is the Golden Rule in action. What would Homo Ahimsa do? At the top of the list would be to live vegan since that is in perfect alignment with ahimsa nonviolence and the Golden Rule. Veganism can be defined as a way of life that excludes using, confining or killing animals for any purpose. It is an ethical principle that leads to living nonviolently and with compassion toward all people, animals, nature and the Earth. It is a commitment to touch gently, rescue, liberate, love and cherish all sacred life. Ahimsa literally means non-harm and is a commitment to nonviolence, truth, lovingkindness, and justice. The shining beacon of the Golden Rule that has been part of cultures for these many centuries finds its pure and whole expression with the arising of vegan Homo Ahimsa consciousness in us all.

Isaac Bashevis Singer famously said, "As long as people will shed the blood of innocent creatures, there can be no peace, no liberty, no harmony between people. Slaughter and justice cannot dwell together." That profound statement carries within it a major key to our rising consciousness and the world of peace we want to create. By simply ending the shedding of "blood of innocent creatures," we have a chance to create a world of peace, liberty and harmony. And what is really exciting about this is that we don't have to wait for Big Ag to decide to be nice. We have the power in our own gentle hands. We simply stop buying their products, and their doors will have to close, bringing to a final end the hells on earth that caused so much pain and misery. Imagine that! Let us rejoice that we do indeed have that power.

Gandhi once prayed, while witnessing the sacrificial slaughter of thousands of lambs at the Temple of Kali, "for some great spirit, man or

woman, fired with divine pity, who will deliver us from this heinous sin, save the lives of the innocent creatures, and purify the temple.” Let us all be an answer to Gandhi’s prayer. Let us purify the temple of Mother Earth. Let us hold the hands and paws and hooves and fins of those who need to know that we have finally awakened to who we really are. Now we understand that we have the power to stop their suffering and eliminate this vile, diabolical, immoral industry. Let us join together, hand in hand, around the world and rise up to our higher consciousness of lovingkindness, ask forgiveness, and get busy healing the damage Homo Sapiens has done.

\*Homo Ahimsa first appeared in the book *Peace to All Beings* and is the subject of a new book, *Homo Ahimsa: Who We Really Are and How We’re Going to Save the World*. A description of our transformation from the predator species — Homo Sapiens — to the caretaker species — Homo Ahimsa — is at [Sailesh Rao’s climatehealers.org](http://SaileshRao’sclimatehealers.org)

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## **10. ABOLISHING INTENSIVE LIVESTOCK AGRICULTURE: A GLOBAL IMPERATIVE**

**RICHARD SCHWARTZ, PH.D.**

Modern intensive livestock agriculture and animal-based diets are responsible for the cruel treatment of billions of animals worldwide and contribute heavily to the epidemic of heart disease, cancer and many other life-threatening diseases. They are also having devastating consequences for the environment and the depletion of scarce resources. In order to increase chances to leave a decent habitable world for future generations, it is essential that we eliminate or at least greatly reduce intensive factory farming.

As I write this in early June 2020, the world is suffering greatly from a deadly coronavirus pandemic that has infected millions of people, killed hundreds of thousands, caused massive unemployment, and severely damaged many businesses. As with previous pandemics, including SARS, MERS, Ebola, swine flu, and bird flu, the likely source is the mistreatment and consumption of animals. According to the United Nations, on average a new infectious disease emerges in humans every four months, and 75% come from animals. Continuing the wildlife trade and modern intensive livestock agriculture would make future

pandemics nearly inevitable.

Factory farming is a major contributor to the greatest current threat to humanity: climate change. The world is already experiencing major negative effects from an increasingly hotter world. Every decade since the 1970s has been hotter than the previous decade. All 20 years in this century are among the 21 hottest years worldwide since temperature records were first widely recorded around 1880. Global temperature records were successively broken in 2014, 15, and 16, the only time this ever happened in three consecutive years.

This warming has already had serious environmental consequences. Glaciers worldwide and the polar ice caps are rapidly melting, contributing to significant rises in sea levels. There has already been “sunny day flooding” in coastal cities, including Miami, Florida. There has been a substantial increase in the frequency and severity of droughts, wildfires, storms, floods, and other climate events. California has experienced so many of these events that its former governor Jerry Brown said, “Humanity is on a collision course with nature.”

As devastating as climate change has already been, climate experts are predicting that conditions will likely soon be far worse. They project that the world is approaching a climate tipping point due to positive feedback loops (vicious cycles), when climate change spins out of control, with truly devastating consequences. In a report released in October 2019, the highly respected Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an organization composed of leading climate experts from over 100 countries, stated that ‘unprecedented changes’ must occur by 2030 for the world to have a chance to avert a massive climate catastrophe.

Among the unprecedented changes that must be made is a major societal shift toward vegan diets. Although it is often overlooked, animal-based agriculture is a major contributor to climate change, it contributes significantly to all four major global warming gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxides, and chlorofluorocarbons. Every year

millions of acres of tropical forest are cleared for animal agriculture, releasing millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and destroying trees that absorb and store CO<sub>2</sub>.

The highly mechanized agricultural sector uses a significant amount of fossil fuel energy, and this also contributes to carbon dioxide emissions. Cattle emit methane as part of their digestive and excretory processes, as do termites who feast on the charred remains of trees. The large amounts of petrochemical fertilizers used to produce feed crops for grain-fed animals create significant amounts of nitrous oxides. Also, the increased refrigeration necessary to prevent animal products from spoiling adds chlorofluorocarbons to the atmosphere.

According to a 2006 UN Food and Agriculture Organization report "Livestock's Long Shadow," animal-based agriculture emits more greenhouse gases (in carbon dioxide equivalents) than all the cars, planes, ships and other means of transportation worldwide combined. Making the situation even worse, the report projected that the number of farmed animals will double in the next 50 years. If that increase occurs, the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions would negate reductions from increased efficiencies and reductions in other areas, making avoiding the most serious effects of climate change very difficult. The 2009 cover story in *World Watch* magazine, "Livestock and Climate Change," written by two environmentalists associated with the World Bank, argued that the livestock sector was responsible for at least 51% of all human-induced greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, animal-based diets contribute to world hunger and malnutrition. Over 10% of the world's population are chronically hungry and an estimated nine million people die from hunger each year. Almost 70 percent of the grain grown in the United States and about a third of the grain grown worldwide are fed to animals destined for slaughter. If food was grown solely for people, rather than so much of it being first fed to animals, it could increase available calories by up to 70 percent, enough to feed four billion additional people. Making the situation even

more shameful is that healthy foods like corn, soy, and oats, high in fiber and complex carbohydrates and devoid of cholesterol and saturated fat, are fed to animals, resulting in meat, which has the opposite nutritional characteristics, making it harmful to human health.

Animal-based agriculture is also extremely wasteful of resources. A meat-and dairy-based diet requires about 17 times as much land, 13 times as much water, and more than ten times as much energy as a completely plant-based diet. About 70 percent of the world's fresh water is used to raise livestock, primarily to irrigate feed crops. In California, the production of just one edible pound of beef uses up to 5,000 gallons of water, while only 23 gallons are needed to produce a pound of tomatoes. It takes about a hundred times more water to produce a pound of meat than it does to produce a pound of grain.

A 1988 article in Newsweek magazine indicated that the amount of water needed to raise just one cow for slaughter would float a naval destroyer. Four billion of the world's people face water scarcities at least one month a year and one-half billion people face such scarcities all year. Future wars are more likely to be fought over water than over oil.

Intensive factor farming also contributes significantly to water pollution. Livestock in the United States produce a massive amount of manure, and much of it ends up in rivers, lakes, streams, and underground water sources. The amount of waste produced by 10,000 cattle in a feedlot equals that of a city of 110,000 people. In addition, huge amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides used in the production of animal feed crops end up in surface and ground waters, representing a significant threat to human health. In terms of energy, the production of one pound of steak (500 calories of food energy) uses 20,000 calories of fossil fuels, most of which is used to produce feed crops. The annual beef consumption of a typical American family of four requires more than 260 gallons of fuel, as much as the average car uses in six months.

Cattle ranching is a major cause of deforestation. Since 1970,

much of the world's forests have been destroyed in order to create pasture land and land to grow crops for farmed animals. The production of just one imported quarter-pound hamburger requires the clearing of up to 55 square feet of rain forest. Much additional forest areas have been destroyed by increasingly widespread wildfires caused by climate change.

Livestock overgrazing causes erosion and the creation of deserts throughout the world. Cattle production is a major cause of desertification, over-cultivation of the land, and deforestation. According to the Worldwatch Institute, each pound of feedlot-produced steak erodes about 35 pounds of American topsoil. According to the United Nations, if present agricultural conditions continue, almost all the world's topsoil will be gone within 60 years.

Factory farming also causes significant bio-diversity losses. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, more plant species in the United States have been threatened or eliminated by livestock agriculture than by any other cause. The number of wild animals on the American range has dropped sharply, largely due to their inability to compete with cattle for food. Many species of plants and animals are disappearing annually because of the rapid destruction of rain forests.

Still another threat from factory farming involves the extensive use of antibiotics to reduce diseases in animals who are raised in very unnatural, confined, crowded, unsanitary conditions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "There is now overwhelming evidence that the routine prophylactic use of antibiotics is leading to the rise of antibiotic resistant superbugs...and, if we don't do something to curb antibiotic use in both human and animal medicine we will face a post-antibiotic era where currently treatable diseases will once again kill."

When one considers the above facts, as well as the soaring health care costs associated with degenerative diseases caused by animal-based diets, it becomes increasingly clear that veganism, or at least

vegetarianism, is not only an important individual choice, but also an imperative for national solvency and global survival.

It is imperative that people become aware of the far-reaching consequences of animal agriculture in order to shift away from a diet that is causing major harm for the United States and other countries, crippling and killing millions of people annually with chronic diseases, threatening the world's ecosystems, wasting scarce resources, contributing to widespread hunger, and cruelly exploiting animals.

All of us can contribute to a more humane, peaceful, healthy, and environmentally sustainable planet by further educating ourselves on the issues and then speaking out. Such books as *Diet for a New America* by John Robbins, *Beyond Beef* by Jeremy Rifkin, *Vegetarian Sourcebook* by Keith Akers, and *Eating Animals* by Jonathan Safran Foer, are excellent places to start. Enlighten others through personal conversations, meetings with opinion leaders in your community, letters and op-ed articles to newspapers and other publications, and calls to radio talk shows. There is a world that needs saving, but global sustainability is largely dependent on the demise of intensive animal agriculture. Within our choice of diet lies the power to create a better world.

I want to express much appreciation to Steve Kaufman, director of the Christian Vegetarian Association, for his many valuable suggestions about this article.

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## 11. ANIMAL AGRICULTURE IS LOGICALLY IMMORAL

SAILESH RAO, PH.D.

**“What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the  
oppressor, but the silence of the bystander.”**

**- Elie Wiesel**

Social change is in the air. The economic downturn is calling for social change. The Animal Rights movement is demanding social change. The Black Lives Matter movement is demanding social change. The Climate and Environmental justice movements are demanding social change. And ever since she discovered the UNITY of all life and that animals are her family, even my 9-year old granddaughter Kimaya, has been demanding social change.

But how does social change truly occur?

Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest architects of social change in recent history, understood that social change couldn't occur without personal transformations in the face of entrenched oppressive institutions. He believed that it is only through concerted personal transformations undertaken by millions of individuals that a recalcitrant

society is forced to change direction. This is what Gandhi meant when he said,

*“Be the change you want to see in the world.”*

Gandhi started the Khadi movement in India in 1919, in which he asked the people of India to change their clothes in order to take on the British Empire, the mightiest empire the world had ever seen till then. He wrote in the Navjivan magazine in 1926, <sup>[1]</sup>

*“I consider it my duty to induce people, by every honest means, to wear Khadi.”*

By 1930, when an estimated 180 million Indians had rejected British clothes and were wearing Khadi clothes made by Indians in India, the textile mills in Manchester went bankrupt and the British government was on its knees begging to negotiate with Gandhi. Such is the power of concerted personal transformations to effect social change. Conversely, no social change can be possible until millions of individuals change their minds about prevailing unjust institutions and stop patronizing them through their own personal transformations.

In what follows, I will make the case that the VEGAN movement calling for a total shut down of the animal agriculture industry is the exact equivalent of the Khadi movement for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Now, it's not about what we wear, but about what we eat and otherwise consume. If people all over the world stop consuming animal products of any kind, we can shake the mighty corporate empire that's ruling the world today and experience true freedom and regeneration of the Earth and all species. Otherwise, we are doomed to annihilate all life and kill ourselves off in an ignominious end to a supposedly “doubly wise” species, Homo Sapiens Sapiens!

We define VEGAN as “Vitality Engaged Guardians of Animals and Nature” and VEGANism as a way of living in which we seek to never intentionally hurt animals unnecessarily, but care for them and

Nature instead. By that definition, most of us are already VEGAN in our hearts. However, we live in a society where what we say and what we do are not always in alignment, because we have been systematically deceiving ourselves regarding the necessity of consuming animal products.

This is why the animal agriculture industry has no place in a thriving human society. Human beings have no need to consume animal products of any kind at any stage of our life cycle and the vast majority of humans would never deliberately hurt innocent animals unnecessarily. In contrast, the animal agriculture industry routinely hurts animals and the workers who “process” those animals, even as it corrupts our government officials to overlook its egregious abuses, while persuading them to designate it as “critical infrastructure.” [2]

When the COVID-19 pandemic caused by an animal-borne Coronavirus burst upon the world in March of 2020, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), said, [3]

*“It boggles my mind how when we have so many diseases that emanate out of that unusual human-animal interface that we don’t just shut it down.”*

But what exactly is this “unusual human-animal interface”? Dr. Aysha Akhtar, a former Commander in the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and author of the book, “Animals and Public Health: Why Treating Animals Better is Critical to Human Welfare [4]” identified any human-animal interface where animals are stressed [5] to be a potential source of such zoonotic pandemics. This would include not just wet markets and factory farms, but also slaughterhouses, animal research facilities, zoos, circuses, rodeos and other animal abusing human enterprises. Dr. Michael Greger [6] has listed numerous common diseases such as typhoid, cholera, smallpox, chicken pox, leprosy, influenza, swine flu, mad cow, SARS, bird flu and Ebola, in addition to COVID-19, all of which originated from the animal agriculture industry.

Dr. Greger has also shown with irrefutable scientific evidence that fourteen of the fifteen leading causes of death in Western countries can be mitigated and even reversed by a whole-foods plant-based VEGAN diet <sup>[7]</sup>. The only exception is “iatrogenic causes”, which translates to doctors’ mistakes. Therefore, our appetite for animal products is a leading killer of Western citizens. At the same time, hunger related causes kill more people globally than any other ailment. The food insecurity causing hunger related deaths is an artificial scarcity created by the animal agriculture industry.

Humans are extracting SIX times as much food <sup>[8]</sup> as we really need for our consumption. However, the animal agriculture industry is siphoning the vast majority of that food for its captive animals, while returning a small amount of animal foods for human consumption. There is nearly a 40 to 1 reduction in dry matter biomass of food going through an animal before it reaches a human plate, which results in an artificial scarcity. Therefore, without animal agriculture, our colonial economic system of artificial scarcities could potentially be transformed into a decolonized economic system of natural abundance. The following story best illustrates this point.

Imagine a single mother’s family with 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls. The mother makes enough food for the children, leaves it in the fridge and entrusts her eldest son to take care of his siblings while she goes to work each day. Every night, when she returns from work, the food is gone but her youngest daughter is still hungry and therefore, she makes more food the next day. This goes on for a while until the mother is now making 46 plates of food every day to feed her 8 children.

Each day, the eldest brother takes 40 plates of food and makes one sister feed them to farmed animals. He then instructs another sister to extract food from these farmed animals and she returns with just one plate of meat, dairy, fish and eggs.

Then the eldest brother announces to his siblings that only 7 plates of food are available while there are 8 mouths to feed and therefore, they all need to work for him so that he can determine who gets to eat and who doesn't. He institutes a monetary system using pieces of paper with pictures of dead ancestors on them to determine who deserves what share of the food and water within the family.

He makes one brother build fast cars and another create shiny objects for his entertainment. He makes the third brother mine the fossil fuels and raw materials needed for creating fast cars and shiny objects. He makes one sister sew fancy clothes for him to wear.

Finally, he tells his youngest sister that he has nothing for her to do and since she is jobless, she won't be eating much food either. He keeps this exploitative family dynamics going for a while using divide-and-conquer techniques, pitting sibling against sibling based on the color of their skin or their religious and gender identities. However, despite all serving his every whim, the eldest brother himself isn't very happy either.

He had been lying to his siblings that they must strive to eat animal foods because such foods are the only source of protein and calcium, important nutrients for their wellbeing. He had also been arguing that if the family stopped eating animal foods, the two sisters who work on feeding and milking the animals would become jobless and starve like their youngest sister. Such lies and specious arguments were now catching up to him.

The sister who sews his clothes had turned VEGAN and she had become living proof that the family could not only live, but actually thrive on a whole-foods plant-based VEGAN diet. In contrast, the eldest brother, who had been consuming

the lion's share of animal foods, is now overweight, sick and miserable, popping anti-depressants just to make it through each day. Therefore, they all began to see through the lies that had been keeping them working frenziedly to feed the insatiable desires of their eldest brother. They realize that the color of their skin or their gender identity doesn't make them inferior, as they had been told. Indeed, they are all created equal and entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, just like the enslaved animals that had been exploited terribly in their midst.

Matters came to a pass when a viral infection shuts down the economic activities in the family and the eldest brother begins throwing away plates of food because his siblings are no longer able to work on his behalf and therefore don't possess those pieces of paper with pictures of dead ancestors on them.

The other children get together and imagine a different way of living in which everyone's needs are met and even the eldest brother would get healthy again. They repudiate the exploitation of animals and resolve to share the abundance of food that their mother had been making each day so that no one goes hungry. They resolve to clean up the mess that they had made during the process of building fast cars, shiny objects and fancy clothes. They resolve to regenerate the forests that they had destroyed for the production of animal foods. As a result of making all these changes, the family heals together and lives happily ever after.

Both for this imagined family of 8 and for our global human family of nearly 8 billion, animal agriculture is the foundation of the system of artificial scarcities and the normalized violence that ensues. To overcome this system, we need to cut through the tissue of lies that hold it together. There is no need to eat animal foods and indeed, animal foods are

actually “low quality” foods damaging to our health, the environment and the animals themselves. Concludes Dr. Sofia Ochoa <sup>[9]</sup>, citing numerous peer-reviewed scientific sources,

*“Plant foods are the real ‘high quality’ foods that we should be eating for optimal health.”*

It is unnecessary to use animals for medical experimentation, product testing, clothing or entertainment either. In this COVID-19 era, there have been numerous articles in the mainstream media pointing out the immorality of animal agriculture. For example, Isaac Bailey wrote in an opinion piece <sup>[10]</sup> in response to the outrageous Presidential executive order <sup>[2]</sup> decreeing slaughterhouses to be “critical infrastructure,”

*“Few of us protested or got the absurdity, the immorality, of telling fellow human beings to risk sacrificing themselves so the rest of us can keep eating burgers.”*

Matthew Scully, the former speechwriter to President George W. Bush, wrote in the National Review, <sup>[11]</sup>

*“(Animal Agriculture is) a business whose ruthlessness to animals, utter indifference to workers, destructiveness to the environment, and manifold harm to human health combine to qualify it as perhaps the least essential industry in America, and among the most amoral.”*

The contrast between Matthew Scully’s characterization of this industry as “least essential” and the Trump administration’s characterization as “critical infrastructure” couldn’t be starker. The former is the perspective of a courageous writer who’s telling the truth about the industry, while the latter is the marketing perspective of the Executive Branch of the United States Government, perpetrating systemic injustice as it sacrifices workers, especially People of Color (POC), on the altar of economic growth and corporate profits.

Unfortunately, our US government, whether run by Republicans

or Democrats, has been routinely sacrificing POC for economic gain. Dietary racism <sup>[12]</sup> is a concept that was first introduced by Dr. Milton Mills to describe the systemic racism that is prevalent in our institutional dietary recommendations. The normalization of animal foods through these recommendations selectively disadvantage POC who are genetically pre-disposed to fare worse when consuming these unhealthy foods.

In addition, animal agriculture is the leading cause of our global environmental catastrophes. At the Rio summit in 1992, the UN identified three major environmental problems, biodiversity loss, ecosystems collapse and climate change, along with two major engines of planetary destruction, the animal agriculture industry and the fossil fuel industry. It formed three conventions to address these environmental catastrophes:

1. The **UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** whose purpose is to conserve biological diversity on the planet and to ensure the sustainable use of its genetic resources. This convention began meeting annually, but now meets once every two years, even though the world has not made any progress on its objectives. Is this because animal agriculture is the leading cause of biodiversity loss?
2. The **UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** whose purpose is to reverse and prevent desertification and land degradation. This convention also began meeting annually, but now meets once every two years, even though the world has not made any progress on its objectives. Is this because animal agriculture is the leading cause of desertification and land degradation?
3. The **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** whose purpose is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. This



convention has continued to meet annually even as it makes little to no progress on its objectives because it frames the burning of fossil fuels as the leading cause of climate change. But is that really true?

In our animal agriculture position paper <sup>[13]</sup>, we use a Global Sensitivity Analysis (GSA) to show that animal agriculture is actually the leading cause of climate change, responsible for at least 87% of the greenhouse gas emissions annually. This is primarily because animal agriculture uses 37% of the ice-free land area of the planet just for grazing animals and the opportunity cost of such inefficient land use is enormous. Furthermore, we show that the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is a politico-scientific body comprised of government representatives and climate scientists, has industry scientists co-authoring the animal agriculture sections of its climate reports, thereby completely undermining its scientific credibility.

Ultimately, how we shut down the animal agriculture industry and the fossil fuel industry is an engineering problem and it is unwise to let a politico-scientific body like the UN IPCC propose solutions to such an engineering problem. If we wouldn't let non-engineers design Mars rover expeditions at NASA Jet Propulsion Labs (JPL), why would we let them design our planet's climate regulation strategies?

The shut down process for these sunset industries has to be designed considering the incremental radiative forcing, i.e., the incremental global heating per unit area of the earth's surface, caused by animal agriculture ( $0.1 \text{ W/m}^2/\text{year}$ ) and fossil fuels ( $-0.9 \text{ W/m}^2/\text{year}$ ), which then clearly indicates that animal agriculture must be shut down first, following which at most 11% of the fossil fuel industry can be shut down each year for the next 9 or more years.

To shut down the animal agriculture industry, we must stop consuming animal "products" of any kind, not just stop eating animal "foods". For every ton of animal "foods" that it produces, the animal agriculture industry also produces 0.7 tons of leather, fur, cosmetics,

glue, etc., and it is perfectly capable of raising animals for the latter “products” if we continue to buy them. Therefore, all animal “products” must be boycotted, not just animal “foods”, for us to make a beneficial impact on the environment.

Frankly, no self-respecting engineer would ever propose the fossil fuel first shut down strategy that the IPCC is pursuing, given the IPCC's own radiative forcing data. Such sheer incompetence would be grounds for dismissal in any well run auto mechanic's shop, much less an engineering enterprise. So why are we letting the UN IPCC get away with this incompetence?

Is this because as the famed American environmentalist, Gus Speth, put it,

*“I used to think that the top environmental problems were **biodiversity loss, ecosystems collapse and climate change**. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address those problems.*

*I was wrong. The top environmental problems are **selfishness, greed and apathy** and to deal with those we need **a spiritual and cultural transformation** – and we scientists don't know how to do that.”*

Perhaps the seminal event that caused these UN Conventions on the environment to fail so miserably, is the statement by the former US President, George H. W. Bush at the Rio Summit,

*“The American way of life is non-negotiable!”*

Unfortunately, this has been interpreted to mean that the rampant, cheeseburger-eating consumerism of American society is non-negotiable. Instead, we would all be much better off if we interpreted that to mean the foundations of equality, the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in the American Declaration of Independence are non-negotiable, not their flawed implementation in the colonialist, racist

patriarchy that is ruling the world today.

Didn't Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. dream of an America where what we do actually matches what we say in our founding documents?

Through the Declaration of Independence, we say that "all men (beings) are created equal", while we have implemented the most unequal society in human history. We say that our creator has endowed us with an inalienable right to life, while we have created a society in which everyone has to "earn a living", implying that those who don't serve the colonial "master" are not entitled to live. From the inalienable right to liberty, we have created a white supremacist government that institutionalized slavery. And from an inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness, we have created the most medicated society in human history with half our adult citizens on anti-depressants or anti-anxiety medications or illegal drugs on a regular basis, as corporate marketers stoke and satisfy our never-ending desires.

Whenever an implementation is so diametrically opposite to its specification, we can be sure that there are axiomatic flaws in the implementation. Take, for instance, the Protein myth, in which government officials and industry operatives pretend that animal foods are the primary source of the essential macronutrient, protein. The US government so carefully nurtures this myth that it appealed to it as the primary reason for declaring slaughterhouses to be "critical infrastructure" recently. However, only plants have the ability to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere to synthesize proteins and therefore, all proteins originate in plants. Animal protein is truly recycled plant protein. Furthermore, the largest land animals on the planet, the elephant, the rhinoceros, the gorilla, are all herbivores, putting the lie to the myth that animal foods are the primary source of protein on the planet.

Likewise, the calcium myth in which government officials and industry operatives pretend that dairy foods are the primary source of the mineral calcium, even though many plant foods have significantly

more calcium than dairy on a calorific basis. The USDA appeals to this calcium myth in order to recommend 3 servings of dairy per person per day, even though the vast majority of POC are lactose intolerant and are sickened by dairy foods.

Also, humans are herbivores. We have been pretending that we are omnivores, but our anatomy, physiology and evolutionary lineage all point to humans as herbivores. Dr. Milton Mills <sup>[14]</sup> and many other researchers have compiled significant scientific evidence to prove this point, including the fact that our innate reaction to raw animal flesh is revulsion. Such revulsion is the human brain's natural response mechanism to discourage us from consuming foods that would make us ill. Indeed, the only way humans can consume animal foods is by cooking, pasteurizing and disguising them with spices and herbs so that we can trick our brains into pretending they are plant-based foods. Even so, the human body responds with chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and atherosclerosis, when provided a steady intake of such animal foods. This is why the American Dietetic Association has said that it is unnecessary to eat animal foods of any kind at any stage of our life cycle.

Finally, choosing to consume meat, dairy and other animal products is a colonialist, racist, ableist, sexist and speciesist (crass) act. Therefore, animal agriculture is truly institutionalized social injustice <sup>[15]</sup>.

Animal agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation. Whenever we cut down forests, we are displacing indigenous people, essentially telling them that their civilization is inferior to ours and must make way for our global industrial civilization.

This is **Colonialism 101**.

Today, factory farms and slaughterhouses are located where POC live so that the animal waste, diseases and pandemics affect them the most. Even though most POC are lactose intolerant, our dietary guidelines promote the daily consumption of dairy products, thereby

inhibiting learning abilities and physical health for POC. Furthermore, POC tend to live in food deserts where fresh fruits and vegetables are unavailable making it difficult for them to maintain good health.

This is **Racism 101**.

Slaughterhouse work is performed mostly by POC and it results in some of the highest levels of workplace injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The slaughterhouse owners then discard the disabled workers with impunity.

This is **Ableism 101**.

Animal agriculture requires the outright abuse of the feminine by impregnating female animals at will with artificial devices. How can we expect workers who are forced to routinely abuse the animal feminine then go home and behave honorably with their female human relatives?

This is **Sexism 101**.

Finally, it is self-evident that animal agriculture would not exist if we consider other species to have moral worth.

This is **Speciesism 101**.

Therefore, from a social justice perspective as well, it is time to shut down the animal agriculture industry once and for all. Anatomically, physiologically, evolutionarily, ethically, morally, environmentally and socially, the animal agriculture industry deserves to be buried in the scrap heap of history.

To paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi,

*"I consider it my duty to induce people, by every honest means, to go VEGAN!"*

The animal agriculture industry is logically immoral!

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## ANIMAL AGRICULTURE IS IMMORAL



## **12. AN INTERFAITH COMPASSION MOVEMENT CAN CHANGE THE WORLD**

**RABBI DR. SHMULY YANKLOWITZ**

There are so many reasons why an interfaith vegan movement with a more prominent voice has the potential to create powerful change.

Starting movements that create positive change for society is righteous, laborious work. In the cloistered worlds of plant-based diets and animal welfare advocacy, there is not enough collaboration for the greater good. People are often looking for their niche. This is perfectly understandable: Individuals have their chosen spheres of interest and comfort zones and want to dedicate their time to what they know best.

I am no exception. I have my own aspirations of course, but as of late, the notion of building a broader universal vision for the animal welfare movement has struck me as the future of the cause. If we are going to truly make a difference to in our efforts to reduce the cruelty and consumption foisted upon billions of innocent, sentient beings, then we're going to have to consolidate our efforts. Together, we could be a real force. As St. Francis of Assisi wrote centuries ago, "Not to hurt our humble brethren (i.e. the animals) is our first duty to them, but to stop

there is not enough.” For me, the most natural place to start this fortification of our movement is within our communities of faith.

To be sure, the vegan and animal rights communities are mostly secular movements. It is wonderful that so many secular individuals have taken up such an extraordinary cause, and religious vegans owe enormous gratitude to these pioneers. Religious vegans need to now take a bigger seat at the table and to bring our views to the ongoing conversation and discussion. For as it says in the Bhagavad Gita “One is dearest to God who has no enemies among the living beings, who is nonviolent to all creatures.”

### **Fruitful Collaboration Between Faiths**

Faith-based initiatives addressing animal welfare have been marginal due to a lack of fruitful collaboration *between* faiths. While each faith possesses unique and important qualities, it is in the area of bridge-building and demonstrating unity where will be most powerful.

Kant implores us to remember that: “He who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals.”

Religious communities must take this truth to heart and be among the first to step up and say “No!” to the perpetuation of cruelty towards other creatures. The rabbis taught that we must not only avoid the Biblical prohibition of causing pain to animals (*tza’ar ba’alei chayim*) but that we should also seek to show compassion and even to learn from animals (Eruvin 100b).

### **Trusted Religious Leaders Have a Wide Reach**

In our post-modern society, local communities and neighborhood bonds have weakened. Religious communities, on the other hand, are still strong and central in many places. When organized around a cause, religious communities have astronomical potential to

impact not just individuals, but whole communities as well. Religious people are more likely to follow their authorities and communal norms. They are also more likely to show up at communal events on a consistent basis.

When the Pope talks about climate change, hundreds of millions of Catholics listen. When an authoritative and wise Rabbi talks about animal welfare, the Jewish community listens. When the President of the Mormon Church pronounces, his members listen. When an Imam spreads a declaration of peace, his congregation listens. When a Lama expounds a message of tranquility towards all, politicians listen. And so it will go until all have the chance to listen.

On a practical level, religious institutions and leaders have massive political influence, an influence that is needed to shift legislation from current cruel policies. The unfortunate legalization of so-called ag-gag laws—laws that curb the First Amendment rights of concerned citizens—were partly the result of too little political organization amongst animal welfare activists. Religious institutions and figures have the means and ability to influence legislators through old-fashioned methods like grassroots organizing, petitioning, and spreading awareness. Melding political sophistication with the sincere exercise of ideals could greatly advance the cause of passing animal welfare legislation around the nation and around the world.

Animal welfare issues, framed in terms of the spiritual and the moral, are deeply powerful. They can awaken people to their ethical potential, to a greater awareness of the injustices around them. Jeremy Bentham provided the pithiest query in this way: “The question is not Can they [animals] reason?, nor Can they talk?, but Can they *suffer*?” What is Bentham asking of us? Not to consider the financial value of animals, nor their utility towards man, but their *inherent dignity* to occupy the same safe and compassionate realm as humans. There is nothing more powerful than having people realize that we share a world with countless beautiful creatures, each with their own story and their

own nobility. Countless people, through naiveté or passive willingness to ignore the broader implications of their actions, perpetuate a cruel, unjust system that treats creatures with a brutish sadism and a callousness that makes a stomach turn.

### **Calling on Friends and People of Faith to Band Together**

Paul McCartney once said, “If slaughterhouses had glass walls, we would all be vegetarian.” These beautiful words inspire me to call for a greater mission! I’m calling on friends and colleagues of faith to join together and tear down the walls of complacency and tribalism, and to bring clarity to the masses by combining old wisdom with new perspectives. We need to be more ambitious if we are to going to end the needless cruelty inflicted upon living creatures every minute.

We live in a singular time where the connection between faiths is closer than at any time in history. Let us seize the unique opportunity. Religious people also have a monumental role to play in fostering a more compassionate world that honors all life and protects all sentient beings. Let us not squander our resources. Let us unite under a banner of friendship, mutual respect, and the unyielding desire to ensure that Creation is respected and given the deference it truly deserves. To make this possible, it will require the humility of people of faith to create space for others and it will require the secular community to create space for those of faith. If we truly care more about building a more compassionate world than flexing our own identities, then we will come out of our corners into a broader arena to change the world together.

**Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz** is the Founder and CEO of SHAMAYIM (the Jewish vegan movement) and is the author of 18 books on Jewish ethics. Newsweek named Rabbi Shmuly one of the top 50 rabbis in America.

### 13. THE FIRST CASUALTY OF WAR

STEVE KAUFMAN, M.D.

Sen. Hiram W. Johnson declared in 1917, “The first casualty when war comes is truth.” Does this apply to humanity’s mistreatment of nonhuman animals? If so, what are the implications for society at large?

Undeniably, humans routinely perpetrate acts of extreme violence on nonhuman animals. I don’t think this alone constitutes warfare, because humans can easily subdue those animals who resist their fate. In contrast, the conflict between animal agribusiness and animal advocates does resemble warfare, because animal advocates are a genuine financial threat. Though relatively small in number, reluctant to take up arms (for practical and ethical reasons), and divided by bitter internecine conflicts related to strategies, animal advocates can decrease animal agribusinesses profitability several ways. They can reduce the market for flesh and other animal products by encouraging veganism, vegetarianism, and reducitarianism; and animal welfare reforms can increase production costs. Animal advocates might not threaten to destroy the institution of animal agribusiness, but they constitute a potential problem.

Animal agribusiness' responses to these challenges have been combative, as well as duplicitous. The Animal Enterprises Terrorism Act of 2006 proscribes severe penalties for anyone who "damages or causes the loss of any real or personal property" or "places a person in reasonable fear" of injury. The punitive measures, combined with the law's vague language, have likely had a chilling effect on animal activism. Similarly, many states have enacted "ag-gag" laws that criminalize undercover filming of animal abuse on factory farms without the consent of owners. A number of these laws have been overturned on First Amendment grounds that protect free speech, but the threat of imprisonment has likely deterred some activists. Recently, several states have prohibited labeling non-animal milk and meat products as "milk" and "meat." Producers of these non-animal products clearly label their products as plant-based because their customers want to avoid animal products, but nonetheless animal agribusiness claims that the labels "mislead" the public. I think these threats constitute a form of warfare.

Undercover investigations by animal activists have repeatedly belied animal agribusiness' claim that animals on factory farms are treated well and that death at the slaughterhouse is quick and painless. To believe such reassurances requires a willing suspension of disbelief, given what these investigations regularly reveal. Herein lies the obvious risk to animals as well as the less apparent risk to humanity. Industries routinely defend their interests, and we have come to expect them to prevaricate at times. However, when large segments of the public readily accept blatant lies as truth, it becomes very difficult for differently minded people to come to a consensus or a compromise. There is little or no basis for mutual respect, which nonviolent conflict resolution requires. It becomes increasingly attractive to resolve disputes at every level, from interpersonal relations to international relations, with violence.

### **Nurturing the Great Lie**

Deceit related to humanity's treatment of nonhuman animals

starts in childhood. Young people have a natural affinity with animals, and many children are horrified when they discover that meat comes from murdered animals. While many children go through a period of not wanting to eat meat, this is usually short-lived, because parents routinely coerce their children with the threat that they won't get dessert if they don't eat the main course. Adults aim to assuage children's guilt by asserting, falsely, that animals on farms have happy lives.

Sometimes, animal agribusiness invokes total fictions, such as the now-discontinued McDonald's advertising campaign of the "Hamburger Patch," which depicted hamburgers growing off plant vines. For children raised on farms, the reality of animal abuse is harder to hide. There, many children in 4-H programs raise an animal from infancy to "market weight." After developing a bond with an animal who unwittingly befriends and trusts them, the children are forced to sell their companion, usually at a state fair, for slaughter. They typically respond to this traumatic event by hardening their hearts against animals, lest they experience such grief and guilt again.

While children who have never seen factory farms might be excused for believing false accounts, adults seem to have comparable gullibility. Campaigns such as the California Happy Cow campaign reassure a willingly deceived public that animal agribusiness raises no serious ethical issues. In truth, undercover videos shown by news outlets, indefatigable animal rights advocates, and myriad web sites repeatedly demonstrate factory farming's horrors. Nonetheless, people refuse to accept that "it's really that bad" or choose to turn away from disturbing images. In the war for the hearts and minds of the public, it is clear who the public wants to win.

### **Animals Aren't the Only Victims**

Those who find comfort in thinking that the victims are "just animals" and who feel pride in their attending to "more important" human problems fail to recognize the interconnections between animal

and human issues. I will not elaborate here on the many ways that animal abuse contributes to human suffering, including environmental degradation; climate change; depletion of land, water, energy, and other scarce resources; reduction of food security for vulnerable humans; promotion of diabetes, heart disease, certain cancers, and other chronic diseases; and development of antibiotic-resistant “superbugs” and viral epidemics. All these concerns are extremely important. I want to focus on the insidious, devastating consequences of a society’s choice to embrace falsehoods.

President John Adams noted, “Facts are stubborn things,” and a society that refuses to acknowledge unwelcomed facts increases its vulnerability to the consequences of those facts. A good example is climate change, which threatens to massively disrupt human civilization, particularly if climate change deniers effectively prevent efforts to mitigate the looming disaster.

More subtly, falsehoods erode people’s trust in institutions and in each other. Once communities exceed about 150 people, it is difficult for everyone to know each other’s reputation. If there are no community standards for honesty, disputes that easily lead to violence abound. Law enforcement can contain occasional criminality, and litigation can resolve occasional dishonest dealings. However, at a personal level, universal dishonesty impairs trade and promotes violence. At a societal level, excessively dishonest and corrupt government officials undermine the legitimacy of their rule and encourage revolt.

### **Can Humanism Prevail?**

Falsehoods related to animal issues might not undermine human relations as long as the victims were exclusively nonhuman animals. In theory, people could accept the lies perpetrated by animal agribusiness and other industries that abuse animals, while in matters that relate to human well-being they could maintain high standards of integrity. In practice, this approach is doomed to fail, in large part because it is not



possible to establish clear boundaries between those individuals people care about and those who are outside people's circle of concern.

On an evolutionary timescale, humans lived in small tribal groups until the recent past. One's loyalties were largely limited to one one's tribe, within which there were familial bonds. Though humans subsequently have succeeded in organizing into much larger groups, tribalism remains a binding force. People tend to align along religious, ideological, regional, ethnic, national, and other parameters. Few people, it seems, are capable of complete human universalism, perhaps in part because people often derive a degree of self-esteem from their membership in a distinct group. Justifications for tribalism generally involve disparagement of other groups, and this is where falsehoods emerge.

A similar problem arises when people try to disregard all nonhumans. People want to denigrate those animals they routinely abuse, such as farmed animals. This assuages their guilt and assists their defense against animal advocates. However, there are also animals who we regard as among "us," in particular companion animals with whom we have loving relationships. Indeed, the fact that people choose to dedicate significant amounts of their limited time and financial resources to companion animals while many humans remain in desperate need for those same resources demonstrates that we sometimes care more about these companion animals than other humans. While most people do not object to lies about the treatment of farmed animals, few would accept that torturing and murdering of the family dog raises no serious moral concerns.

Despite animal agribusinesses' obvious mistreatment of and prevarications about animals, few people raise objections, because they want to eat animals and animal products. Likewise, they want the other supposed benefits of harmful animal exploitation for science, clothing, entertainment, and for other purposes. Similar greed has inspired humans to wreak great harm upon each other. Though examples

abound, the institution of slavery sufficiently illustrates the point. Moreover, just as fabrications undergird animal exploitation and abuse, lies about slavery were essential to the perpetuation of that institution in America.

### **Relevance to Our Moment**

I do not think it is coincidental that, as we live in a time of unmatched abuse of nonhuman animals, we find that respect for the truth has plummeted. In America, as well as in other declining democracies such as those in Turkey, Hungary, and Brazil, facts seem to have little relevance to public policy. The predictable consequences have included unprecedented corruption and incompetence.

There are growing threats to basic individual human rights, and the future of humanity in general is in doubt due to climate change and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We urgently need spiritual leaders who can unite us against the forces of violence and injustice. However, if they implicitly or explicitly endorse animal agribusiness' abuse of animals, they must either compromise their moral principles or compromise truth. Either way, they undermine their credibility. At some level of consciousness, we recognize that abusing animals is wrong and grounded in lies. It is hard to trust those who preach about integrity but live in deceit. As we face growing crises in our communities, in our nations, and in our world, I see no reason to hope if we support massively harmful institutions that are grounded in lies.

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## 14. ...OR DIE TRYING

SUSAN HARGREAVES

“I wish I could stop all this cruelty in the slaughterhouses, take over and change things” said a person who had called me on the Animal Hero Kids cell to find out about volunteering.

“What would you do?” I asked.

“I am not vegetarian, but if I was in charge, there wouldn’t be all of the cruelty” was the reply.

This is a common, reoccurring statement made by people who say they are against cruelty. I hear this refrain often when I am communicating in my role as a kindness educator and the founder of Animal Hero Kids.

“Is there a kind way to kill someone who doesn’t want to be killed?” I replied in a reasonable, non-accusatory tone.

It was 1979 when I picked up the Toronto Sun newspaper and was shocked to my core by the images I saw blaring out at me on the front page. Pigs with round black scorch burn marks on their bodies from being electro-shock prodded who were lying in their own vomit,

pigs with bloody crushed back legs struggling to stand. Tears poured down my face as I reeled. This is what I had expected in the back of my mind, yet, hadn't wanted to think about. Here it was the photographic, irrefutable, visual proof of the horrors behind the slaughterhouse door.

I realized I had caused this and more by eating animals. I was as complicit in supporting the abuse as if I had handed the twisted bullies their electro shock prods myself. I was still holding the front page when I concluded I had reached the end of my history of eating animals.

The answer to my question "Is there a kind way to kill someone who doesn't want to be killed?" underlines why animal based agriculture is immoral and unethical. The animals and their families don't want to die just as much as we wouldn't want to.

A basic rule of thumb across all cultures, commandments, edicts, beliefs, and a universal moral code is that killing is immoral. The wording is not, killing is immoral unless you can make money or killing is immoral unless the body parts taste good.

Now I love fostering critical thinking and posing questions like I stated above during my presentations for higher grade levels. To encourage looking past tradition or the prevalent beliefs of our current society to reevaluate our choices is the stuff my dreams are made of.

You don't have to be vegan to join Animal Hero Kids. There are children who join because they wish to help dogs or cats or dolphins or horses. When they learn how all animals are treated they decide to act on their new information by going vegan and often the parents learn from the kids and act on their conscience, too.

It is now forty years since I saw the truth of animal based agriculture. I ended up at the same place where the photos I had seen were taken, met the photographers and worked alongside them. Today the Keele and St Clair Stockyards I investigated in Toronto is a shopping mall. No more transport truckloads of animals who have been traveling

for days without food or water pull up into the parking lot. Instead there are busloads of senior citizens who walk the mall aisle ways early in the morning in the winter for exercise.

I don't delude myself this means there is less animal suffering in the world with this stockyard closed.

I am still shocked by the brutal mass killings. There are even new ways to kill being used which cause the intense suffering of our fellow creatures one farm in Iowa sealed off doorways and piped hot steam in to roast the pigs alive.

Yes, animal-based agriculture is an immoral, unethical, towering babble of insanity, we still need to dismantle, brick by brick, life by life.

Every vegan consumer choice tears down the wall of animal abuse surrounding animal based agriculture. Each presentation where I ask the question, "Is there a kind way to kill someone who doesn't want to be killed?" Every time someone enjoys an unexpectedly delicious vegan alternative. All of these instances contribute to a time when humans will realize animal based agriculture is not only, immoral and unethical, it is also outdated and inefficient.

We need to evolve to this vegan world, if not, we will face more super viruses, more climate crisis disasters. The planet's and our own survival depends on this shift.

We will arrive in our kinder, vegan world by 2026 or die trying.

**Susan Hargreaves** is the founder of Animal Hero Kids ([animalherokids.org](http://animalherokids.org)), an all-volunteer kindness education charity empowering youth to compassionate action via free school presentations highlighting stories of animal rescue and advocacy. Susan is also an author, humane educator, and animal activist of 40 years.



## 15. SIMPLY VEGAN: CONFRONTING THE IMMORALITY OF EATING MEAT IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES

VICTORIA MORAN

When my daughter, Adair, vegan from the start, was three or four, we visited my parents in Florida. All ready to go out for dinner, Adair listened intently as her grandfather asked, “So, are you ready for a big steak?” She became very serious and said, “I don’t eat *cow*” – lowering her voice for the final syllable and emphasizing “cow” to be sure he got it.

In the years since, as I’ve spoken with and worked with hundreds of people looking to adopt this lifestyle, I’ve had the question time and again:

“But what do I say to my family? How do I tell them at the office that I need ‘special food’ at the company dinner?”

When I get those questions, I think back to my little girl, now all grown up, and how she stated so simply, eloquently, with no criticism or judgment: “I don’t eat cow.”

Eating meat is immoral because it requires the enslavement of other beings and then deprives them of life itself. It is also immoral at this time in history because it is destroying the planet on which all life depends. The people who do it largely do not understand. They're hypnotized by the status quo, the foods on which they grew up, the advertising industry, and much of what is still taught about making nutritious food choices. But the spell is wearing thin.

These days, being vegan is trending with a vengeance. Upscale menus offer vegan soups and entrees; fast food outlets have veggie burgers and sliders and sausage and more; coffee bars feature oat, coconut, soy, and other nondairy milks.

Even so, it's my observation that social pressure sends far too many people back to eating animal products. It happens in all sorts of ways: Someone starts dating a meat-loving keto guy or gal; or moves to a part of the country where being vegan is still decidedly odd; or they inherit a new HMO doctor whose ideas about diet may be old-fashioned and unsubstantiated but, coming from an authority figure, tough to argue. This is when we need to be able to, simply and without antagonism or hesitation, hold our ground. We need to state as clearly as "I don't eat cow" that we consume plant foods only — for the life of the animal, the health of our body, and the future of the planet.

In order to share a conviction with someone else, it has to first be a conviction for you. Are you trying this out, or are you committed? There's nothing wrong with having a rehearsal period, learning the ropes, giving yourself a chance to see how this way of eating and living sits with you. Getting from zero to vegan is an individual process, not a time trial, and even moving in this direction is a glorious thing. Once you determine, however, that this is the way you wish to live, it's necessary to accept that you've crossed a line.

A conviction isn't a "diet" where a little won't hurt or you get to "cheat" on the weekends. There's no cheating on something that you genuinely want to do. When you're that enamored of the healthy food



you eat, the vegan shoes you wear, and the compassionate choices you make, you'll be vegan forever after and only get more excited about it as time goes by.

All you have to do to get this kind of romance with veganism is to add more than you subtract to your diet and your life. This seems contradictory because you'll obviously eliminate — all at once or over time — flesh, eggs, and animal milk; and when you do it, it can seem like a great big deal. The key to success: do this in a celebratory manner. Find a vegan version of every food you miss, whether it's the taste, the texture, or the memories associated with a particular dish. Explore vegan recipes, restaurants, websites, books, films, classes, conferences, fashions, travel, and whatever else will make this transition a daily adventure.

You get exotic fruits and veggies and, if your experience is like mine, going vegan may mean that you can stop watching your weight and start living a bigger, bolder life. You can get to know rescued farmed animals at a sanctuary, and perhaps "adopt" a pig or a chicken there and share in their daily joy of being alive. You can be at peace with life as it is, because even though you can't end all the suffering in the world, you can end some of it. And as more and more of us make this change together, there's no limit to how bright the future can be.

**Victoria Moran** ([mainstreetvegan.net](http://mainstreetvegan.net)), vegan for over thirty-seven years, is the author of *Main Street Vegan*, *The Love-Powered Diet*, and *The Good Karma Diet* and cited by *VegNews* magazine among the Top 10 Living Vegetarian Authors. She hosts the Main Street Vegan podcast and is the director of Main Street Academy, training and certifying Vegan Lifestyle Coaches & Educators.



## 16. OUR BANQUET OF CONSEQUENCES

DR. WILL TUTTLE

**“Everybody, soon or late, sits down  
to a banquet of consequences.”  
- Robert Louis Stevenson**

The spinning fury at the core of our culture, animal agriculture, not only exploits and destroys the lives and purposes of animals, it does the same to humans as well, and we see this playing out now with this draconian lockdown of healthy people, eroding mental health, human rights, and economic independence, and destroying countless small and medium businesses (including vegan ones).

In my lectures over the years, I’ve described animal agriculture as a Trojan horse: on the surface it appears to be a helpful gift, but on closer examination, and with deeper understanding, we see clearly that it is an utterly harmful force in our individual and collective lives, incessantly harming the health of our ecosystems and society, as well as our physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

Animal agriculture is also the hidden cause of the COVID pandemic, and of the dominant narrative that is imprisoning billions of

people in fear and confusion in their homes, and eroding our capacity to speak up and defend our basic freedoms. We are reaping the harvest that we have been sowing for decades and centuries. This is our banquet of consequences. Our culture has created a vast system of animal enslavement that heartlessly condemns billions of sentient beings—whose interests are as significant to them as ours are to us—to lives of misery, terror, and pain. Their purposes are stolen and they are reduced to mere material units of production in a rapacious economic system that sells them by the pound. They are impregnated on rape racks, their offspring immediately stolen, exploited, and killed, and all are forcibly vaccinated and drugged, tracked, microchipped, mercilessly mutilated and oppressed, and brutally killed in an unnecessary, ugly, surreal prison-world devoid of meaning and respect. Animal agriculture defines our society.

Those of us who purchase the flesh and secretions of these unfortunate beings, which is most of humanity worldwide, are the causal forces propelling this system ever onward with the flood of money we spend—votes we cast—driving its ongoing and reckless devastation. Thus, as we persist in engineering and imposing a dystopian future on billions of beings, we now see the gaping maw of a dystopian future looming before our eyes. Mandatory confinement, separation of family members, loss of basic freedoms, forced vaccinations, routine microchipping, mass tracking and surveillance: all these standard factory-farm practices are now being openly discussed and planned by health officials, pharmaceutical representatives, and government agencies. What we relentlessly inflict on farmed animals we see manifesting in our human world, and, ironically, we seem powerless and strangely uninspired to stop it.

Why is this?

Why are we so unable to see the obvious and respond with clarity, vitality, and solidarity to these insidious existential dangers to us and to our children?

Why are we immobilized by fear and mesmerized by the voices of authority, unable to connect with either our intuitive wisdom or to think critically about our situation?

Why the nearly-blind allegiance to mainstream media narratives and medical-pharmaceutical forces that we should by now have learned to question?

Why do we find those relative few who dare to speak up and question the dominant COVID narrative to be so threatening?

It is because animal agriculture not only exploits animals, it exploits us. As we exploit and abuse, we will be exploited and abused. Each one of us, as we purchase meat, dairy, or egg products, becomes an invisible killer to the cows, pigs, hens, and fishes we are exploiting. We directly but invisibly cause terror, pain, and death, and we compound it further by eating it and feeding it to our vulnerable and innocent children, ritually indoctrinating them as we were. We are the invisible killers, but we repress this awareness, and project it outward, impulsively terrified of invisible killers, which seem to be everywhere.

We spend billions on military defense to protect ourselves from lurking terrorists, and now are even more frightened by microscopic enemies, the hordes of viruses, pathogens, and other unseen agents of death arising and projected from our unfaced violence.

This is our shadow: our repressed awareness, guilt, and shame, propelling us to give our power away to authorities in the vain hope they will protect us. At war with animals, nature, and each other, we make war on invisible viruses as well, completely failing to understand them in our fear-based materialist delusion. We see and suspect enemies and threats everywhere because we are the enemies and threats, and our fear sends us into the waiting arms of the merciless global conglomerates, who provide both the narrative and the toxic “solution.” They will profit from us more in power even than in dollars. They have purchased both media and government, and we find ourselves, the

wounded and programmed dominators of animals, increasingly dominated by impersonal forces beyond our control.

There is but one way to human freedom, and to a world of health and harmony, and that is the way of ahimsa—nonharmfulness to other beings—a vegan world of respect for all. We will be worthy of understanding and appreciating ourselves and everyone on this beautiful and abundant planet when we dismantle the entrenched narrative of human superiority and entitlement.

A new story is yearning to be born in our human culture. It has ancient roots, and this current emergency (emerge-and-see), if we respond appropriately, can put us on a higher path of liberation and healing.

It seems that vegans are in a unique position to be the midwife helpers of this new birth. We have been discussing for decades how animal agriculture is the source of many of the food-borne diseases afflicting humanity, such as campylobacter, listeria, salmonella, and mad-cow, as well as the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and the zoonotic spread of disease. Beside this of course, are the many diseases caused by diets high in animal-sourced foods, such as heart disease, liver and kidney disease, diabetes, obesity, dementia, and many forms of cancer. As vegans, we are typically making a conscious effort to take responsibility for our health and also to contribute to the health of others, and to question the established animal agriculture narratives that promote violence toward animals, hungry people, workers, ecosystems, indigenous people, future generations, and our own organs, cells, and relationships.

Fortunately, it seems that increasing numbers of people are beginning to make the connections between animal agriculture and the many assaults on our collective health and freedom.

May we all do our best to keep this momentum increasing, and to protect our rights and prevent censorship. These are the immense

opportunities and challenges we are currently facing. Thanks for contributing your heart, love, critical thinking, and deep questioning during this demanding time.

**Dr. Will Tuttle** is a visionary speaker, educator, musician, and best-selling author. A former Zen monk with a Ph.D. from U.C., Berkeley, and a vegan since 1980, his writings, music, and presentations focus on compassion, creativity, intuition, and the intersection of social justice, animal liberation, and environmental, health, spiritual, and peace issues. He is the author of *The World Peace Diet* and *Your Inner Islands*, editor of *Circles of Compassion* and *Buddhism & Veganism*, and recipient of the Courage of Conscience Award and the Empty Cages Prize.





## 17. WHAT DOES GOD HAVE TO DO WITH EGGS?

RABBI YONATAN NERIL

Where do the eggs we eat come from? How do the chickens that produce those eggs live? Is this in light with religious and ethical values?

I ask these questions in part because this week the U.S. recalled and destroyed 206 million eggs, following a salmonella outbreak. Those eggs were laid by chickens in the 200 million population chicken facility of 'Rose Acre Farms.' These eggs were to be scrambled or poached, baked in cakes or muffins, or cooked in pancakes, waffles, or French toast. But some of them had become contaminated with salmonella bacteria, likely arising from faulty conditions in a facility with 200 million chickens crowded in massive sheds. This week I visited a chicken shed, saw first-hand some of the conditions, and recorded the video below.

Until recently in human history, eggs were a delicacy, and they were eaten on special occasions. Domesticated chickens are not mentioned in the Bible, and eggs are only mentioned in relating to finding nests of wild birds. As Rabbi Gil Marks writes in his history of Jewish food, the Passover seder begins with an egg because Romans began their festive meals with goose eggs. This changed dramatically in

1956, when vaccines and antibiotics were introduced to chickens, which enabled the mass rearing, or 'factory farming,' of chickens. The chicken population then grew exponentially, and now stands at 24 billion. There are close to four chickens for every person on the planet. Chickens are the most populous animal or bird on planet earth. The vast majority of these 24 billion chickens live in industrial sheds in order to produce eggs or be slaughtered for meat. Global egg production doubled in just the past 25 years.

Rabbi David Rosen, a prominent Orthodox rabbi in Jerusalem, AJC International Director of Interreligious Affairs, and former chief rabbi of Ireland, stated that "the conditions under which the overwhelming majority of eggs are produced violate Jewish Law and therefore they cannot be considered kosher." Rabbi Rosen is a compassionate, broad-minded religious leader. He is aware of the incredible pain that we subject chickens to, and of the deep-seated Jewish teachings demanding compassion to animals. He recognizes that there is something fundamentally inconsistent between Jewish values and industrial production and consumption of eggs. And he has made a bold Jewish legal statement: most eggs are not kosher, because of how the chickens that produce them are treated.

The Psalmist lauds compassion toward all creatures as a key trait of the Divine: "God is good to all, and God's mercy is upon all His works." The Jewish tradition teaches that God has compassion on birds, including chickens. According to the Jewish tradition, "Just as God has compassion on animals, God is filled with compassion on birds (Deuteronomy Rabba 6:1), as it is written in Deuteronomy 22:6 "If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest.... do not take the mother together with her young."

And just as God has compassion, so too we are supposed to have compassion. The Talmud teaches, "Be similar, as it were, to God, the Almighty: Just as He is compassionate and merciful, so too should you be compassionate and merciful." (Tractate Shabbat 133b) In manifesting

the Divine spark within us, we are supposed to be compassionate to people and to all creatures.

So my heart goes out to the tens of billions of chickens in the world living in sheds. Most chickens produced in factories will never touch the ground or see the light of day. The incredible, edible egg is incredible for the person who eats it and bound up in so much suffering for the chicken that produces it. They are produced in a factory similar to how we produce iPhones and refrigerators. But these are living beings. Genesis chapter 1 verse 30 says that God gave them souls. They are more than egg-laying machines.

How we treat the mother chicken (i.e., a hen) is part and parcel of how we're treating mother earth. The Jewish mystical tradition teaches that humans exile the feminine presence of God from the earth when humanity does not act righteously.

Eggs are sold in boxes with pictures of free chickens, but that's not the case for most egg-producing chickens. Companies that sell eggs effectively lie to consumers, by misleading them to believe that the chickens that produced the eggs were free and in nature. Consuming mainstream eggs means keeping chickens in industrial sheds.

We try to be ethical, moral, and spiritually-aware. There are few foods as much bound up in suffering as eggs. There is a major gap between what is happening to tens of billions of chickens, and the practice of morality in modern life. The time has come to make a change. We can start by reducing or eliminating our personal consumption of eggs.

A version of this article was originally published in 2018 in *The Times of Israel*.

**Rabbi Yonatan Neril** founded and directs The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development ([interfaithsustain.com](http://interfaithsustain.com)). He speaks internationally on religion and ecology, and co-organized ten interfaith environmental conferences in Jerusalem and the U.S. He completed an M.A. and B.A. at Stanford. He lives with his wife, Shana, and two children in Jerusalem.



## **18. A NEW NORMAL: THE ANTI-SPECIESISM IMPERATIVE IN THE POST COVID-19 WORLD**

HOPE BOHANEK

**“Our disrespect for wild animals and our disrespect  
for farmed animals has created this situation where  
disease can spill over to infect human beings.”**

**- Jane Goodall**

As we reel in chaos from a global pandemic, something potentially positive is emerging from the crisis. As a society, many of us have accepted the burden of social distancing at personal, social, and even economic expense, ultimately making our practice of “sheltering in place” a collective expression of compassion and care. Most of us have agreed to this inconvenient adversity to help keep others safe—especially the elderly and those with compromised health. We have collectively subscribed to social distancing for reasons beyond self-interest. In this chapter, I will explore this development that surpasses our conventional empathy and offer the hope that if magnified, this communal compassion and care could be what saves us from the next pandemic and washes our hands of animal suffering and climate disruption.

Our exploitation of non-human animals and the environment has *everything* to do with the origin of COVID-19 and it will likely cause even more deadly future pandemics if we don't make changes. We need to adopt preventative measures based on the understanding that social distancing *after* the outbreak is not enough and direct our collective attention to another major social and cultural conversion—disrupting the systematic exploitation of non-human animals. If we can tap into the global compassion that we are experiencing for other humans in the era of COVID-19 to a commensurate care and concern for *all* animals, the earth, and the climate crisis, we might flatten the curve of suffering and slow the destruction on the planet. Perhaps the first step is recognizing that we are globally steeped in the worldview of speciesism.

Systems of structural violence such as speciesism, racism, sexism, and homophobia are characterized by the false belief that one group is entitled to be dominant over, or more important than, another. Speciesism is a collection of attitudes, ideas, beliefs, and even other subconscious cultural and psychological patterns that wrongly legitimize humans inflicting domination over all other beings in the animal kingdom. The assumption of human superiority allows for the horrific exploitation of animals in a variety of forms worldwide. A recent example of speciesism that has attracted public attention is a growing understanding that animal exploitation is at the heart of the pandemic of the COVID-19 pandemic. <sup>[1]</sup>

Many of the infectious diseases that have appeared in recent decades have directly resulted from humans' exploitation of animals, both wild and domestic. Capturing, confining, breeding, killing, and eating animals is now known to be the cause of the pandemic we are facing in 2020 and likely beyond. In the case of COVID-19, the source was the speciesist attitudes and actions of those who engage in wildlife trafficking. People are increasingly encroaching into wild areas and capturing animals, taking them from their homes, and confining them to tiny, filthy cages for commerce and profit. Stressed and sick animals in these wretched conditions creates an ideal breeding ground for what are

called zoonotic diseases—any disease spread from non-human animals to humans. Zoonotic diseases have caused numerous other epidemics when transmitted from animals to humans such as Ebola, AIDS, SARS, MERS, all of which originated from butchering and eating wild animals.

However, capturing and eating wildlife is not the only culprit. Farmed animals—the birds, cows, pigs, and goats who we kill and eat—have also been the source of infectious disease outbreaks and mass illness such as Swine Flu (H1N1), Bird Flu, etc. Food-borne illnesses such as E. Coli, Campylobacter, Salmonella, and infections from the MRSA bacterium, are rooted in the farming and slaughter of animals. Further, animal foods are the main source of food-borne sicknesses. <sup>[2]</sup> To prevent these pathogens, farmers administer en masse pharmaceutical drugs to overcrowded, sick animals. In fact, more than half of all antibiotics manufactured in the U.S. are fed to farmed animals. These drugs, especially excessive use of antibiotics, is creating an increase of antibiotic resistant pathogens in humans, increasing a looming threat of a pandemic perhaps even greater than COVID-19. <sup>[3]</sup>

Apart from illnesses caused by microbes and infection, there is also overwhelming evidence linking the consumption of animal foods—dairy, eggs, and meat—to the major causes of death in the U.S.—chronic degenerative diseases such as stroke, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and numerous cancers. <sup>[4]</sup>

We should be cautious of any blanket statement that might imply that “all of the things that kill us would be eliminated by our not eating animals,” because such a generalization fails to recognize the nuances of public health—and in the “post-fact era” it is increasingly important for us to make statements based on scientific accuracy and that allow for complexity. Some examples of exceptions to such generalizations would be malaria carried by mosquitos and Lyme disease caused by bacteria transmitted by ticks.

But the truth about zoonotic diseases is frightening enough. According to the Center for Disease Control, three out of four new and

novel infectious diseases come from human/animal contact and that contact is almost always the result of humans' confining, butchering, and eating animals. <sup>[5]</sup> A new doctor-researched white paper revealed that "most if not all" of the world's major outbreaks of infectious disease since 1900 have been due to some form of animal exploitation. <sup>[6]</sup>

### **Beyond the Requisite Veganism – Working Toward Recognizing and Rejecting Speciesism**

It is becoming increasingly evident that we would eliminate an immeasurable amount of animal suffering with a widespread cultural shift towards veganism. But what is perhaps less apparent to many is that with such a shift, we could also eliminate an enormous degree of human suffering as well by establishing a worldwide vegan ethic. Our own human fate rests on how we treat animals. In fact, we would not be suffering the current pandemic and international economic and health crisis if, with a wider recognition of the detriment effects of a speciesist worldview, we instead acted with compassion for all animals. Veganism is a pre-paradigm at this point, but while our culture has taken pause to act for the collective care and benefit of others, we may have an opportunity to broaden that circle of compassion to replace the old paradigms that have kept all life on the planet subjugated for too long.

Veganism—the boycott of the products of animal suffering—is certainly an important campaign and message to continue, but I believe that tactically, we must address the paradigmatic causes of animal exploitation and have a deeper understanding of how speciesism is a primary cultural and behavioral obstacle to the efficacy of a successful animal liberation movement.

Thanks to decades of efforts from activists, work of authors and filmmakers, and meaningful movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too, the violence and oppression of systematic racism and sexism are receiving greater coverage in mainstream media and the national discussions around these issues have come to the forefront of our



collective attention. This is valuable progress as we are exposing the ethical flaws in human culture, inequality, discrimination, and violence—and demanding justice and empathy.

I hope that as animal advocates (and as allies to *all* social justice movements) we can look to the successes of these other movements for inspiration and imagine a world where the media works as diligently to understand and expose speciesism as it does the other paradigms of violence, oppression, and domination that have, thankfully, finally gained the airtime they deserve. It is time to uncover the injustice of treating someone cruelly, taking away their agency, and killing them for profit just because that someone is another species. Science (and common sense) now tell us that, undoubtedly, non-human animals not only feel pain and suffer anxiety and trauma, but that they are profoundly emotional and sentient. <sup>[7]</sup>

Animals grieve, animals dread, animals rejoice—they love life and we have no right to take it from them. We need to call out the injustice of speciesism to root out the underlying source of all human imposed animal suffering, swell the wave of social progress, and carry speciesism, along with the awareness of these other critical social issues, into the light of public scrutiny.

### **Acknowledgment of Sentience Exposes Speciesism**

Signs of the recognition and acceptance of animal sentience are growing around the world. Australia, for example, recently updated its existing animal welfare laws by passing the Animal Welfare Legislation Amendment Bill, <sup>[8]</sup> which states unequivocally that animals possess the ability to “subjectively feel and perceive the world around them.” The bill updates the language of the original law to recognize that animals are sentient and feel emotion and pain. It further recognizes that animals have “intrinsic value” and deserve a quality of life that reflects this value, stating that people have a duty to care for the “mental welfare” as well as the physical well-being of animals.

This is extraordinary progress and furthers the legal status of animals from that of mere property to one that entitles animals to protection and even legal personhood. I would reason further that this legislation recognizes speciesism by acknowledging animals' value and their potential to suffer under oppression. Hopefully, this legislation will set a precedent for other legislators in other countries to follow.

This progressive legislation follows years of scientific evidence of animal consciousness and sentience, culminating in a statement from prominent cognitive neuroscientists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists and computational neuroscientist called the Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness. <sup>[9]</sup> In this declaration, the scientists declare,

“The weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.”

### **Back to “Normal?”**

As the pandemic drags on, we feel the fatigued desire to get back to normal. But as many of us know, “normal” is a nightmare for animals and for the planet. I am hoping that we will take this time of slowing down to reflect on the state of our world and to make changes in our lifestyles that benefit the planet and the animals.

We have the rare opportunity to redefine and reimagine the world. What will we choose? I hope that we continue our collective willingness to make sacrifices for others and extend that care and compassion to non-human animals. When we do go back to “normal,” I hope we do it better.

There are hopeful signs that the quarantine is shifting behaviors.

For example, a recent Nielsen study found that the coronavirus crisis has caused vegan meat sales to increase by 280 percent compared to sales in the spring of 2019. <sup>[10]</sup> Horrible and dangerous working conditions in slaughterhouses and meat processing plants has allowed for the rapid spread of the virus among workers. Despite resistance from the companies and even the government, many facilities have been forced to shut down production and close. The consequent sporadic supply of meat is causing a rise in prices. Meanwhile, plant-based meat is becoming more affordable and sales are through the roof!

Animal free meat companies like Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods are increasing sales, increasing supply, dropping prices, and donating their products to food banks. Beyond Meat's sales were up 85 percent in the first two months of the lockdown. There has been a 500 percent increase in sales of the Impossible Burger, which was available mostly in restaurants in 2019. The company was already planning to roll out their product in grocery stores in 2020. While available only in about 150 retail stores at the beginning of the year, Impossible Foods plans to have animal-free meat products in more than 10,000 stores by the end of the year.

We are seeing an acceleration of the transition to plant-based meats that was already trending. A silver lining of the coronavirus cloud could be more healthy and ethical consumer habits as we emerge into a new normal.

### **Broaden the Narrative and Expose Speciesism**

We need to broaden the narrative to encompass the concept of speciesism. To transform what we do and how we behave as a society, we must first address *who we are* in terms of the paradigmatic foundations that drive human behavior.

Speciesism is one of the most prominent paradigms of mass violence; we need a global awakening to dispel this myth of dominance—this illusion that we have the right to control, confine, kill,

eat, and take away the agency of every other animal on this planet, to the detriment of everyone.

There is the potential for the animals to get lost in philosophical rhetoric; individual accounts of animals must not get lost in the message. It is imperative that we tell their stories and focus on their very real and relevant agony and misery, as well as their jubilation and joy. In addition, however, understanding and rejecting the concept of speciesism by explicitly naming it is critical for taking us to the next level of ethical evolution and motivating the necessary changes so that all sentient beings on this planet can live free of human imposed suffering and death.

A global crisis, especially one of this historic and unprecedented scale, can create a collective introspection on society's behavior, and this moment of reflection can be a powerful opportunity for change.

Given that the current crisis is so closely linked to animal exploitation, it is an important opportunity for our global community to reflect on our relationship to animals and the planet and to emerge from our self-quarantine with a sense of urgency for a worldwide vegan ethic—a resolve for a new normal of compassion and care for everyone—animals and the planet included.

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## 19. 'SO WHO IS GOING TO TEACH THEM?'

DUKE MCLEOD

**"Lo! We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Lo! he hath proved a tyrant and a fool."**

**- Quran 33:72 <sup>[1]</sup>**

### **Morals, politics, and dogma**

Most people I know would without hesitation agree that causing somebody pain and suffering without their consent is immoral; that ignoring their screams and pleas to stop is immoral; most people I know would also apply these moral axioms to their favoured animals, like dogs and cats. Transferring these concerns to other species is however still not prevalent, despite the rise and rise of veganism and the exponential growth of markets for plant-based products. The idea that it is perfectly acceptable to exploit animals for human pleasure and selfish desires is still widely held; and while many realize that the destruction of our environment is morally wrong, still not enough people are making the connection between the systematic destruction of nature, the pain

and suffering of animals and the products they themselves consume. Even less are arguably aware of the common mindset that is at work in the discrimination against women, minoritized ethnicities, and vulnerable communities; the mindset that normalizes the exploitation of the working class as much as it normalizes abusive relationships between people: the idea that might makes right.

In the pursuit of building a fairer, just, and compassionate society, we are experiencing major setbacks as well as major successes. Large companies selling the stolen milk of mistreated cows are going bankrupt; grass-roots organizations fighting for justice are experiencing growth in popularity and support. At the same time state level politics around the globe are dominated by patriarchal strong men who are turning back the wheel on progressive policies and achievements, including women's rights, worker's rights, and indigenous rights. As vegans we have been called pushy, even militant, when voicing our concerns or getting active, while social justice protests are delegitimized by media outlets, and protesters verbally and physically attacked. These attempts to silence our legitimate dissent and opposition to a system of oppression and exploitation has affected many (would-be) advocates and activists, including myself.

For many years it was enough for me to be in my happy vegan bubble. It was in conversations with my then 10-year-old stepson, a life-long vegetarian, now vegan, that I overcome my fear of being stigmatized as one of *those* vegans. As he became more and more conscious about his choices and was transitioning to veganism, he was confronted with the fact that most people in our society eat the bodies and products of animals. One day he asked me the simple but difficult question 'why do so many people not care about the animals?' I answered, 'perhaps they just haven't been taught.' Speaking from my own experience I said that they might have been lied to, having been told by their parents that it is normal and necessary to eat animals. Taking this inter-generational transmission of values and their standing in society into account, one could describe the consumption of animal flesh



and products as a learned behaviour, the subjugation of animals as a widely accepted doctrine and the superiority of humans as a sacred dogma.

Present day humans may have inherited the position as dominant species on Earth from their foremothers and fathers. But this position bears within it the moral failure to care. Carnists, including my younger pre-vegan self, may hold the view that the needs and wants of those anonymous farm animals do not matter and that it is our right to enslave them, and to do unto them as we please. The answer to my stepson was deliberately chosen so that I tell him what I believe to be the truth in a way that does not leave him thinking that the majority of people in his environment are cruel, heartless murderers. It also carries the hope that with the right kind of guidance, be it from within or without, more and more people will choose justice and compassion over violent exploitation and oppression. This hope in turn is based on the assumption prevalent in Islamic moral philosophy that at heart humans have a share in the sacredness, a share in the goodness of the Divine and that moral growth does not depend on adding goodness, but in removing deficiencies <sup>[2]</sup> — in this case apathy, and arrogance. What he said next however, was a wake-up call: ‘So who is going to teach them?’ And in my mind the only possible answer to that question was: Us!

### **A call to action**

As a Muslim I hold that the practices and beliefs of my faith have transforming power and purpose. I believe that God is ar-Rahman ar Rahim, the most-merciful and benevolent, and I strive to practice compassion. Since there is absolutely no need in my life for me to raise and kill and eat animals or consume animal products, the logical, the moral, the compassionate choice is to adopt veganism as a lifestyle. But the teachings of Islam are not only centered on self-development and showing kindness to others. The moral imperative to address the wrongs in society is set out in a famous saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

“Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.” [3]

- Hadith Nawawi 34

This saying is a definite call to action. It presents us with a program and a 3-tiered hierarchy of actions to be taken when faced with ‘evil’, which also includes *zulm* (injustice). The very least moral and faithful action we can take in the face of injustice, according to this hierarchy of actions, is to reject the injustice in our heart. To realize the wrong and to condemn it. In our case, we reject the wrongs of animal agriculture, the wrongs of enslaving entire species and subjecting them to torture for mere pleasure and/or greed. The second tier, beyond the personal realization and rejection, is the act of calling out, as manifest in vegan or animal rights advocacy work. Finding the courage to speak up publicly can however not be taken for granted and thus rejection the ‘evil’ in one’s heart is already considered a show of faith. Advocacy work then requires, or perhaps implies, a higher degree of faith than mere internal rejection. An even higher level of faith, according to this tradition, would be the changing of evil with one’s hand. In other words: activism. On the ground, hands-on activism.

While this hadith has been interpreted in various un- or anti-democratic ways in the past, it can be read as addressing all the *mu’minin* (faithful). It can further be a source of guidance and inspiration for non-Muslims. Let us be brave and advocate for a transition from animal agriculture to horticulture. Let us seize opportunities to educate our families, friends, and strangers about the values of compassion and justice and how to apply them in the way we sustain ourselves. One such opportunity was offered to me in late 2019 during the annual Islam Awareness Week organized by the Muslim University Students Association at the University of Otago in Aotearoa / New Zealand. The weeklong event featured an arts competition, with the theme ‘compassion’. As someone who likes a bit of poetry, I was not

going to let this opportunity pass. So, I composed a poem, which was on public display in the university. I also had the chance to present it to a well-visited lecture theatre, mainly fellow Muslims. The poem I wrote was a passionate plea to consider embodying 'saintly ideals' in the way we sustain ourselves. It was a prayer to the almighty to open the hearts and minds of my fellow Muslims to the higher spiritual values of Islamic teachings. It was a song to inspire my coreligionists to opt out of injustice and explore some vegan ideas. <sup>[4]</sup>

**Advocacy poem: 'Those saintly ideals'**

Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim <sup>[5]</sup>

Ruler of this world <sup>[6]</sup> and of the Unseen <sup>[7]</sup>

Grant me your blessings, please grant me your Deen <sup>[8]</sup>

Ar-Rahman <sup>[9]</sup> is compassionate, but is the Muslim?

How can we claim to be servants, how can we claim to be kind?

When heartfelt compassion is so hard to find?

It's easy to smile and shake hands with each other

But where are those of us that bother

To adjust our habits to those lofty ideals

To embody compassion in our meals?

As a Mercy to all worlds was our Prophet sent

And let me remind you, he was an animal friend!

He chastised abusers and cursed in the end

The Companions who took a bird's young with their hand.

He knew it was cruel, he knew it was wrong

But who will reflect on that lesson, this song?

Will you stop eating their babies, will your morals be strong?

And what of the milk that we like sweet and sour?

Do you really think that cow's milk is our?

The Mother was raped and imprisoned too  
She made milk for her baby and not for you!

But the Babies get killed and thrown away  
They're not even allowed to be with Mum for a day.

The dairy you have is a cruel product  
Its consumption too, a breach of conduct.

Yes, yes, it is said there is goodness in it <sup>[10]</sup>  
But abusing and torture are sins to commit.  
Al-Shafi <sup>[11]</sup> the scholar was wise and he knew:  
First comes the Baby and then maybe you.

And please don't you tell me, you have not yet heard  
That animal farming contributes more than a third  
To the emissions that drive climate change on this earth.  
Do you really think that having your dairy is that much worth?

We are transgressing the bounds, we are going too far  
Destroying creation you know this is Shar! <sup>[12]</sup>  
Perhaps you believe this is ours to take  
As God's own khalifa <sup>[13]</sup>, oh what a mistake.

God established a balance, al-Mizan <sup>[14]</sup>, as a scale,  
Let us be honest as trustees <sup>[15]</sup> we fail,  
We don't show compassion, so low our states  
The forests are burnt to fill our plates.

The Amazon is on fire you must be aware  
To increase space for farms that just would not be there  
If we would not demand them, please show that you care.  
A fact: Muslim countries get most of their meat  
From the farms that were built on the ashes of greed.

So, let's tell our neighbors, let's warn our friends:  
We must change our habits, we must make amends  
Let's change our diets, please look at your hands,  
Speak a prayer to God, you know how it ends,  
For we all know the story of the one sent to hell  
For starving a cat locked up in a cell. <sup>[16]</sup>

Now before you accuse me of wasting your time  
And preaching you falsehood in form of this rhyme  
Let me beg you to stop being part of this crime  
You can be a leader, you can be a Zaim! <sup>[17]</sup>

Wake up my Sisters and show some kindness  
Believe me my brothers, God can cure our blindness  
Just open your hearts, let compassion reside  
In your soul may it dwell, please let us abide  
By the words of the Prophet, our revered teacher:  
There is a reward in serving any creature! <sup>[18]</sup>

And: whoever shows Mercy to the creatures around  
God will show them Mercy <sup>[19]</sup>, so let us be bound  
To compassion and kindness those saintly ideals  
I pray that you all start to eat vegan meals...

### **Conclusions: Accepting and sharing guidance**

While many Muslim scholars are still stuck on the question whether veganism is in fact permissible for Muslims, others are clearing the path for advocacy work. The UK-based Islamic scholar Musa Furber for example has treated the subject of human-nonhuman and human nature relationships in multiple essays. <sup>[20]</sup> While not promoting veganism, or even vegetarianism in his work, Furber gives us with his essays a solid foundation to argue for a radical change in human self-perception as well as a rethinking of our relationships with nature and

other animals. His work leaves no doubt about the fact that animal agriculture is a moral, ethical, and legal challenge for believing Muslims. He further puts human relationships with animals into a context beyond the immediately apparent, into the realm of spirituality:

“How we treat animals is a reflection of the state of our guidance: proper treatment reflects proper guidance, improper treatment reflects misguidance. Any treatment of animals that violates the Sacred Law is not merely a legal or moral wrong; it desecrates the creation and profanes the Creator.” [21]

In the spirit of these words, I would like to encourage everyone of us, those who know and those who don’t know, those who care, and those who don’t care, those with faith and those without: Let us accept this guidance and treat animals with justice and compassion, and let us share this guidance and advocate on these grounds for veganism, animal rights, and the abolishment of animal agriculture. Perhaps then we will fulfill the vision of another prominent UK-based Islamic scholar and pioneer of Islam-based animal rights advocacy work Al-Hafiz Basheer Ahmad Masri (d. 1992), of a new era when human “accords to animals the respect and status they have long deserved and for so long have been denied.” [22]

Let us pray that in this coming era, the cruel behaviors towards animals (and humans), the doctrine of subjugating them (and oppressing other humans), and the dogma of human (white, male) supremacy will be replaced by a lifestyle marked by justice and compassion to all living beings.

## Notes:

[1] According to the Pickthall translation. Source: <https://quran.com/33/72>

Gendered language in sacred texts is a reality we as believers have to deal with, however they do not determine the outcome of our engagement with those texts. For a great scholarly critique of patriarchal readings of the Qur'an see Asma Barlas — *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an* (2002)

[2] See Cyrus Ali Zargar — *The Polished Mirror* (2017) for excellent and inspiring discussions of this and related themes.

[3] The complete hadith reads: "On the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, "Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith." This hadith is part of Imam Nawawi's collection of 40 hadiths and can be found on <https://sunnah.com/nawawi40/34>

Please see Note 1, above, on gendered language in sacred texts.

[4] Please feel free to share this poem but acknowledge me (Duke McLeod) as the author. Please contact me on email ([duke.schruba@otago.ac.nz](mailto:duke.schruba@otago.ac.nz)) if you have any question or if you would like to be sent a PDF version of the poem.

[5] The opening verse of all (-1) chapters of the Quran. Translates to: In the name of God, the Most Compassionate and Merciful; this phrase often serves as a dedication and is commonly uttered upon beginning an activity.

[6] Dunya: Arabic term referring to the material, temporal world

[7] Al-Ghaib: Arabic for the Unseen; the spiritual world, realm of angels, djinn, other beings; other dimensions including heavens and hell

[8] Din: Arabic for religion, faith, or way of life

[9] Ar-Rahman: Arabic for The Compassionate; one of the most mentioned names/attributes of God in the Koran

[10] According to Quran 16:66: 'And indeed, for you in grazing livestock

is a lesson. We give you drink from what is in their bellies - between excretion and blood - pure milk, palatable to drinkers.' Sahih International Translation. Source: <https://quran.com/16/66>

[11] Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (767AD-820AD); famous medieval Islamic scholar, jurist and theologian; attributed with establishing the science of fiqh (jurisprudence); name-giver of one of the four presently remaining and widely followed legal schools of Sunni Islam.

[12] Shar: Arabic for evilness, the Evil

[13] Khalifa: Arabic for successor, steward, vice-regent; in Islamic theology this term usually signifies humans' special role in creation.

[14] Mizan: Arabic for balance. In Islamic theology the term al-Mizan can express the belief that God set up a divine balance in creation based on the interconnectedness of all creation.

[15] Alludes to the concept amana, the trust given to humans according to Quran 33:72; correlates with khalifa;

[16] Alludes to a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, who reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "A woman entered Hell because of a cat which she tied up and did not feed, or let it loose to eat of the vermin of the earth, until it died." (Sunan ibn Majah 4256); Source: <https://sunnah.com/urn/1293590>

[17] Zaim: Arabic for leader

[18] Relates to a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayra: 'The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way, there he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst and came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, "This dog is suffering from thirst as I did." So, he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and watered it. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him. The people said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied: "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate (living being)." ' (Sahih al-Bukhari 2466); Source: <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/46/27>

[19] Relates to a hadith narrated Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As: 'The



Prophet (ﷺ) said: The Compassionate One has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show mercy to those who are on the earth, He Who is in the heaven will show mercy to you.' (Sunan Abi Dawud 4941, Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1924); Source: <https://sunnah.com/abudawud/43/169>

[20] Please see Musa Furber — *Obligations to Future Generations: A Shari'a Perspective* (2012), *Rights and duties pertaining to kept animals: A case study in Islamic Law and Ethics* (2015), *Intensive Animal Farming: Wrongs and Responsibilities* (2017).

[21] Furber (2017) *Intensive Animal Farming: Wrongs and Responsibilities*, Tabah Essay Series, No. 5.

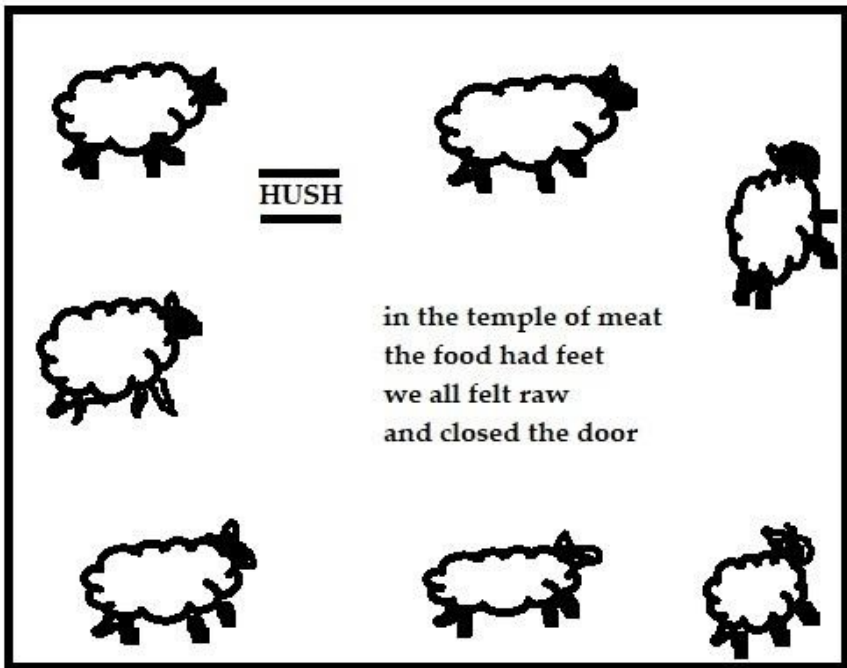
[22] Masri (2007) *Animal Welfare in Islam*, p. 4; also see Haque & Masir (2011) *Principles of Animal Advocacy in Islam, Society & Animals* 19, 279-290.

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## 20. HUSH

S. O. FASRUS



S. O. Fasrus has poems and verses in many online and print anthologies. Most recent poems are included in Culture Matters (online) and Red Poets 25 (print).

Animal Agriculture is Immoral.

**The End.**